



The Official Newsletter of the
**Sun Cities Area
Historical Society**
Spring 2019 | Volume 28 | Number 2



Work to begin in April, with grand opening set for fall
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Inside our spring newsletter ...



Gala IV a huge success!
The museum's fourth annual Jubilee Gala salutes SCHOA and PORA.
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Thank you,
George Meade
Historian Ben Rolloff
looks back at the
role George Meade
had in securing the
community's first fire
hydrants.

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Exhibit salutes Poms
A new exhibit pays tribute to Sun City's
most popular ambassadors.
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The Sun Cities Area Historical Society has announced plans to expand the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum in 2019. Thanks to a grant from the Del E. Webb Foundation, the museum will soon begin construction on a new building directly behind the present museum. The home was one of the first five model homes built in Sun City.

Del Webb Sun Cities Museum announces expansion, capital improvement campaign

By Bret McKeand

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society has announced plans to expand the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum in early 2019 to provide additional space for exhibits and enlarged meeting facilities.

In conjunction with the expansion project, the society has launched its first capital improvement campaign to raise additional funds to pay for facility improvements, exhibit upgrades and other enhancements to the original building.

The expansion, which involves construction of an entirely new building behind the current museum, is made possible by an \$80,000 grant generously donated by the Del E. Webb Foundation.

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum is located at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive in Sun City. The building was one of five model homes originally built in Sun City and

A look back at the history of the famed model home
Historian Ed Allen looks back at the history of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.
See Page 8-9

unveiled when the community first opened on Jan. 1, 1960.

Museum officials earlier this month signed a contract with Desert Legacy Construction Company. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for 10 a.m. Thursday, March 28.

Construction is set to begin in April and work is expected to be complete by mid-summer.

Chas Roberts has donated the HVAC system.

The current museum consists of 1,675 square feet, not counting a carport and back porch. The approximately 700-square-foot new building will replace the back

porch and encompass much of the current back yard. A walkway will connect the new building to the existing facility.

Construction is expected to begin early in 2019. Building construction is expected to cost \$115,000. The museum is launching a fund-raising campaign to cover added costs of interior design, as well as new exhibits, supplies and physical upgrades to the existing building.

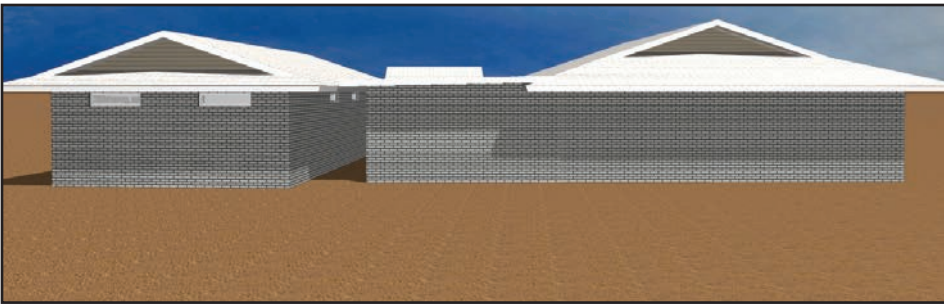
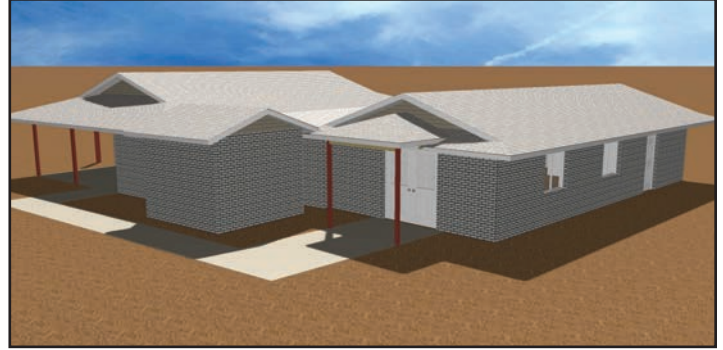
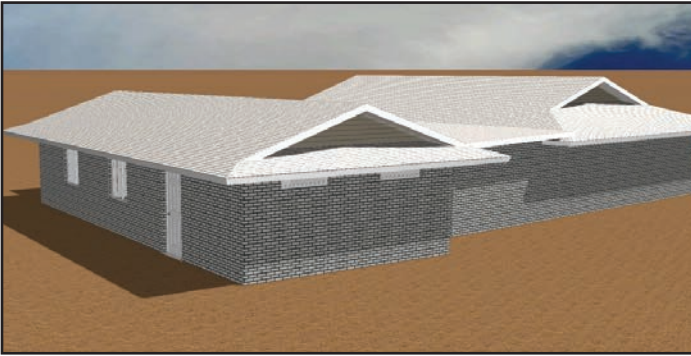
The museum's Board of Trustees is hoping to generate \$100,000 during the 2019 fund campaign.

"The museum plays an important role in promoting the history of the Sun Cities, and we're confident our community will step up to generously support our efforts," said Don Tuffs, president of the SCAHS Board of Trustees.

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society was organized in 1986 as part of the 25th anniversary of Sun

Continued on next page

A glimpse at what the expansion will look like



An artist's rendering of the planned expansion of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum. Upper left: A view of the facility looking west. Above, a view of the museum looking east -- with the expansion on the right and the original building to the left. At left: a view another view looking east -- with the expansion on the left side and the original building on the right.

City. Its mission is to preserve, protect and promote the history of Sun City and Sun City West.

The organization purchased the building in 1990. The home, now the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum and Research Center, has been restored to its original condition and features exhibits and artifacts showcasing the history of the Sun Cities.

The nonprofit organization is directed by a volunteer Board of Trustees and operated by volunteer docents and guides. Operating funds are derived primarily by membership dues, donations and fundraising activities.

The museum is open to the public 1-4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Admission is free.

Visit www.delwebbsuncities-museum.org. Call 623-974-2568 to contribute to the museum or to learn more about becoming a museum sponsor.

Based in Prescott, Ariz., the Del E. Webb Foundation honors

the memory of Del E. Webb, the creator and developer of the Sun Cities. The nonprofit organization supports "results-based programs" that impact society and focuses primarily on child and health initiatives.

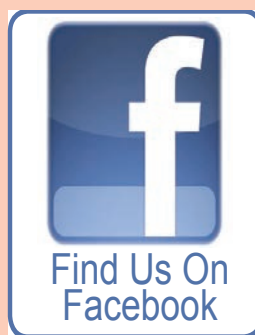
The SCAHS is the parent organization of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum and Research Center. Founded in 1986, the museum

seeks to promote public awareness and appreciation of the history of the nation's first active adult community, Sun City, and its sister city, Sun City West.

The museum's headquarters, located in one of the first of five model homes built in Sun City, was renamed the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum in 2010 as part of Sun City's 50th anniversary.

Visit the museum online!

Fans of Sun Cities history can now visit the Del Webb Sun Cities simply by punching a few keys on their computer keyboard!



Visit the museum's website at www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org to learn more about the community's history, to see a list of current exhibits, sign up for upcoming events, review past newsletters, view historic films and videos, purchase souvenirs and to become a museum sustaining member.

Plus, you can stay up to date on current activities by following the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum on Facebook.

Museum updates



Annual meeting

Marshall Shore, better known as the "Hip Historian" was the guest speaker at the museum's annual meeting in November at Oakmont Recreation Center.



Jubilee Gala IV, the museum's annual fundraiser was held March 7 at Palmbrook Country Club. Community Service Awards were presented to the Sun City Home Owners Association and the Property Residents Association while entertainment was presented by Nicole Pesce. Above, from left, Jim Hunter of SCHOA, Larry Woods of PORA, Don Tufts and Paul Hermann.



Springtime in Sun City AZ

Another perfect season in *The Original Fun City!*

Toll Free 1-844-4 SUN CITY or visit suncityaz.org





Welcome to Sunshine Service

People, meeting needs of people is what Sunshine Service is all about. Sunshine Service lends medical and children's equipment to residents of Sun City and we have been doing so for over 52 years. We are a charitable non-profit Arizona corporation and are funded by voluntary contributions and memorial gifts.

While the equipment is available for the use of all residents or visitors staying with residents, the equipment must not be taken out of Sun City on a permanent basis. As a matter of control, equipment is loaned only to Sun City residents.

Records show that as the population of Sun City grew, so did use of our medical equipment. Savings for Sun City residents have been calculated periodically; in 2015, it was estimated that residents saved over two million dollars in cost of equipment for that year alone.

Sunshine Service, Inc has received local, state and national recognition. Awards received include the George Washington Honor Medal for services to the sick and handicapped from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.

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www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is certified by the Arizona Historical Society



The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the records and artifacts for Sun City, Arizona, (the world's first Active Adult Retirement Community), and its sister city, Sun City West. The Society's headquarters are located in the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, in one of the five original Sun City model homes.

Museum Hours: 1-4 p.m. Monday Wednesday & Friday Or for groups of six or more by appointment Office Manager: Julie Glass

Board of Trustees

- Don Tuffs President Paul Hermmann Vice President Kevin Nicaastro Treasurer Doris Palmer Secretary

- A.J. Kovac Seve Held Toni Ashby Barb Wagers Bret McKeand Ben Roloff Anne Levig

Contributors: Edson Allen, Ben Roloff, Bret McKeand

Layout and composition donated by the Sun City Independent

Message from the President

Expansion, new exhibits kick off exciting year for museum!

As president of the Board of Trustees for 2019, my No. 1 goal is to increase our membership! I hope to have more frequent contact with you – and with our communities – letting more people know about the exciting things going on at the museum, as well as heighten their interest by sharing some lesser known aspects of local history.

Some of you are aware that I worked in public relations and marketing for the Del E. Webb Development Company many years ago.

I emceed many shows at the Sun Bowl, and then served as general manager of the Sundome when it opened in 1980. I remember trying to convince John Meeker to build a smaller auditorium, but he was adamant about building the biggest and the best!

And for years, the Sundome was the largest, single-floor auditorium in the U.S. I hated to see it go, but it lives on at the opposite extreme -- Sundome Jr., Arizona's smallest theater -- a popular place to visit at the museum.

Museum Addition moving along ... Some of you may have missed



Don Tuffs 2019 President Sun Cities Area Historical Society

the news that the Del E. Webb Foundation gave us a grant to add a room to the museum.

Necessary approvals from SCHOA and Maricopa County have been obtained, and we intend to break ground next month.

A committee has been formed to raise the additional funds that will be necessary due to major increases in building costs in the past 12 months, as well as for furnishing the interior.

We hope to use the additional space for more exhibits and to hold monthly coffees with short talks on local history. The goal is to draw more visitors to the museum. Perhaps best of all, the addition will provide a handicap-compliant, public restroom.

Sun City Poms

Exhibit now open... 2019 marks the 40th anniversary of this popular group. Titled "Shattering Stereotypes of Seniors," the exhibit covers the Poms' colorful past and worldwide recognition.

Have you seen the Symphony's 50th Anniversary Exhibit? It's on display at the museum with a duplicate in the lobby of Valley Vista PAC on the days of performances.

Next up: Baseball in the Sun Cities ... Space limitations meant the baseball exhibit had to be taken down to make room for the two new exhibits. But we'll have it back in some form in time for Spring Training, as that always brings in visitors interested in the role baseball has played in our communities.

Support YOUR Museum! We invite you to stop by the museum and see for yourself all the great things going on! We're going to need your support this year more than ever, so please, take a moment and fill out the form on the next page, become a member and help us with a generous contribution! This is going to be an exciting year we hope to see you at the museum!



Be a Part of History!

There are several ways to show your support!

- ✓ Become a member (fill out the form below)
- ✓ Donate to our building campaign (fill out form below)
- ✓ Become a major donor and be recognized on our "Donor Wall" installed in the new expansion. (Call the museum for assistance.)

The past comes to life at the only museum in the nation devoted to the world's very first active adult communities. Located in the first of five model homes built in Sun City, the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum's mission is to preserve, protect and promote the history of Sun City and Sun City West!

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum is expanding in 2019 ... and we need YOUR **SUPPORT!**

In 2019 the museum will undertake a major building expansion and launch its first-ever capital improvement campaign. Support your local museum by making your tax-deductible contribution today!

Fill out the form below to make your tax-deductible contribution

Annual Membership

By becoming a member of the museum's parent organization, the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, you will receive newsletters, announcements of coming events, and a 10% discount on items in the gift shop. **Memberships are tax deductible.**

- Turquoise \$25
- Silver \$50
- Gold \$100 Includes SC or SCW book
- Business Includes listing on museum website

YES, I want to support my local museum! Please accept my contribution:

Membership level: _____ Additional donation: _____
 Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
 Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Make checks payable to Sun Cities Area Historical Society and mail to 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351. SCAHS is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.



Call 623-974-2568

10801 W. Oakmont, Sun City, AZ 85351
Open Monday 1-4 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday 10-4 ♦ FREE ADMISSION!

Visit us -- and donate -- online at www.delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org



Sun City opening day -- Jan. 1, 1960 -- and cars are backed up along Grand Avenue while waiting to view the new community. The museum is located in the first of five model homes open that day for viewing on Oakmont Avenue. Above, crowds tour the model homes. The building in the center of the above photo is today's home to the museum.

Museum's 'home' turns 30

SC model home has been SCAHS headquarters since 1989

By Edson Allen

While the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum is located in one of the five original model homes opened in 1960, it wasn't until 1989 that it was purchased by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society – the parent organization of the museum.

Originally, the Kentworth Model, consisted of 860 square feet and sold for \$8,600 – plus \$600 for A/C and additional \$1,250 for a golf course lot.

In 1961, the model was sold to R.E. Lodge who never actually occupied the house. He instead sold it to N.C. and Marie Wagers.

A year later, the house was sold to John and Chloe MacDonald. They began a series of additions to the rear, which eventually provided space for a larger master bedroom,

a second bathroom and an Arizona room off the kitchen.

The MacDonalds loved roses and the back yard became a beautiful garden.

Docent Barb Wagers -- who also serves on the museum's Board of Trustees -- has many stories to tell about visiting her grandparents, the MacDonalds. Like the time her older sister and brother weren't sleepy and climbed out the bedroom window to go exploring by the light of the moon. An ever-vigilant Posse caught them and returned them to surprised grandparents!

After the death of John in 1984, the house was sold to Jean Painter who used it as a rental property. In 1989, the Historical Society purchased it for \$41,500 with the help of generous donors.

There was one more addition:

In 1992, the Webb Corp. had no further use for a 10-by-10-foot shed that is the oldest building in Sun City!

In 1959, the shed was a small sales office along Grand Avenue to answer questions passers-by had about all the construction activity.

In later years it became a dressing room for the Sun City Saints, a refreshment stand, and storage shed.

Today it serves as "Sundome Jr." – Arizona's smallest theater seating six in chairs taken from the Sundome before it was torn down.

The house became today's museum in time for Sun City's 50th anniversary! Furniture from the 1960s was found for the living room, a former bedroom was devoted to Del Webb, and new exhibits were added about Marinette, Sun City West, baseball, and golf

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum through the years ...



1.) The Sun Cities Area Historical Society purchased the model home in 1989. 2.) The building was renamed by the SCAHS as the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum in 2008. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sun City, the museum held an open house Jan. 1, 2010. 3.) Construction of the McMillin Terrace, a covered backyard patio. 4. Barb Wagers, a member of the SCAHS Board of Trustees, holds photos of her grandparents -- the MacDonalds -- who once owned and lived in the home. Barb has fond memories of visiting the home when she was younger. 5) The living room today is furnished with mid-1960s decor. 6.) The kitchen, too, resemble what homeowners may have enjoyed in the 1960s, complete with pink tile and working refrigerator.

in the Sun Cities.

The building is listed on the Register of Historic Homes.

A generous grant from the Del Webb Foundation had made it possible for the society to expand the museum. Work is scheduled to begin next month with a grand opening scheduled for this fall.

It's as full of life today as it was when it was a model home in 1960! Come visit!

Exhibit salutes West Valley Symphony



Sun Cities Area Historical Society Trustee Ed Allen, left, welcomed members of the West Valley Symphony Board of Trustees during the opening of a new exhibit that celebrates the symphony's 50th anniversary.

History Tidbits

Big Fixes Require Big Ideas: Enter ‘Big George’ Meade

By Ben Rolloff

Imagine a Hall of Fame for significant contributors to the development of Sun City and Sun City West.

Names like Del Webb, Jim Boswell, John Meeker, and R. H. Johnson would be enshrined.

But what about George Meade? Who? Only a street sign marking Meade Drive memorializes Meade for his “big ideas” to fix errors in Sun City — mistakes not repeated in Sun City West.

What follows is an account of Meade’s first significant contribution to Sun City. After retiring from a successful business career, Meade moved to Sun City and can be counted among that initial group of resident leaders. Meade’s first successful “big idea” follows, but first a bit of background.

In retrospect, it is puzzling that Webb’s design team forgot to include fire hydrants when Sun City’s first five large tracts were designed and then built — an area extending from Grand Avenue south all the way to Peoria Avenue.

Home insurance premiums for Sun City’s first residents were unusually high due to the lack of fire hydrants to deliver water in large quantities and quickly. The Sun City Civic Association, later renamed Sun City Home Owner Association (SCHOA), formed a “fire hydrant committee” as early



Sun City Fire Station No. 1 at Bell Road and 99th Avenue was originally named the George Meade Fire Station. Above, the first fire hydrant installed in Sun City, at 107th Avenue and Sun City Boulevard.

as 1961 to begin studying the situation. Thinking that residents would likely vote to incorporate and form a city, SCHOA’s committee just watched and waited.

On Dec. 1, 1964, Sun City held its only binding vote on incorporation, and residents voted 28 percent to form a city government with 72 percent rejecting the idea. There would be no city water department ordering hydrant installation or mayor and city council establishing a city fire department.

To digress just a bit more, the Arizona Fire Ratings Board assigned Sun City a “high risk” category not only because of the hydrant issue but because of its minimal fire protection from 1960 to 1966.

Rural Fire had a small building on 111th and Windsor to shelter its one truck and one fireman. The company began selling fire protection to homeowners for \$12/year, and most new residents eagerly signed up — but not all.

Responding to a call from a non-contracted resident was optional

under the law for Rural. If they did respond, Rural could send a fee statement for service for up to 17 times the actual cost of responding. Rural’s one truck held only 500 gallons of water, but a company official bragged of its expensive misting nozzle that maximized the supply and increased efficiency. The Arizona Fire Rating Board was not impressed.

Six months after the “No to Incorporation” vote, resident H.K. Murphy announced he wanted a fire hydrant close to his house at 10644 Snead Drive. So did his neighbors.

The local water company agreed to install a hydrant at 107th and Sun City Boulevard for \$675. Murphy’s home was one of more than 90 homes within 1,000 feet of that location. A hydrant would drop annual insurance rates by as much as \$13. Murphy asked \$10 from 100 neighbors. Ninety-nine paid up, and the hydrant was installed.

Many other neighborhoods took note and began organizing for a

similar purpose, and SCHOA announced it was studying a plan for fire hydrants for all of Sun City and was working with Webb, the water company and Rural Fire to make it happen.

The group came up with a plan for 48 hydrants, and just before Christmas the State Fire Rating Bureau gave its tentative blessing. Residents in each of the 48 areas were urged by SCHOA to begin organizing to collect the \$675 cost.

Potential hydrant locations were listed in the newspaper, and in early January of 1966 exact locations were determined by Webb engineers. At the same time, Webb, Sun City Water and Rural Fire officials met and determined that all hydrants should be painted yellow instead of traditional red for better visibility at night.

Rural Fire wanted hydrants for its service area and agreed to buy new, longer hoses and add more firemen if the hydrants were installed.

George Meade's first "big idea" surfaced at the same time. Meade, long-time chair of SCHOA's Fire Hydrant Committee, announced a plan to get all the hydrants paid for at no cost to any residents by using rebates to Sun City on license plate fees paid by residents — something Arizona calls a lieu tax or tax in lieu of paying personal property taxes.

Meade read state statutes carefully and discovered Sun City would immediately be eligible to receive up to \$18,000 in lieu tax rebates annually if it formed a voluntary fire district.

Formation would require 10 percent of all residents to sign a petition requesting the district's formation and additionally 50

percent of all deeded property owners would need to sign on as well. SCHOA organized the petition drive, and the requisite signatures were quickly acquired.

Maricopa County required a public hearing to discuss the proposed new district, and an overflow crowd met at Mountain View Auditorium to learn about the plan.

A straw vote showed wide approval, and the county ordered an official election be held on June 6, 1966 with 1,375 voting approval to 80 against.

The district was formed with the first step being putting a temporary governing board of five members in place. All five were members of SCHOA's Board of Directors and Hydrant Committee Chairman George Meade was named Fire Chief.

The final step in the process was having Maricopa County Supervisors approve the election results, but that board was not scheduled to meet until July. A favorable county board vote would make the Sun City Voluntary Fire District eligible for the annual rebate immediately.

Supervisors agreed to a special meeting at the end of June to make Sun City immediately eligible for a rebate check on July 1 — the start of the funding year.

Anticipating that approval would be given, Meade and a host of volunteers under his direction inspected thousands of fees paid by Sun City residents to the Motor Vehicle Department in 1965-1966 and proved the estimate of \$18,000 was far too low, and the eligible rebate to Sun City should be closer to \$30,000.

The reason: a large percentage of Sun City residents registered

expensive cars like Cadillacs and Lincolns and paid registration fees on recreation vehicles as well.

Cars were taxed on 60 percent of their original value. Then 16.25 percent was subtracted from the reduced value for each year since the vehicle was manufactured, and that final reduced value was multiplied by 4 percent to determine the license fee.

Immediately after receiving the first rebate check in early July 1966, Chief Meade signed a contract with Sun City Water to install the planned 48 fire hydrants and an additional 25 as well. Meade also negotiated a long-term contract with the water company for updating and servicing the hydrants, paying for water use charges, and for doing routine maintenance. That was the first step, and negotiations began with Rural Fire to sign a contract to protect all current and future residents and replace the existing system of each resident signing their own contract.

The new fire district wanted protection district-wide and uniform for the entire city. State statutes required wages for the fire board had to be determined and law further required setting up a retirement system for fire personnel.

George Meade came up with creative solutions to comply with the statutes, but that was just the start for him. Meade went on to create other ideas to solve far different sets of problems. Those stories can wait for a future newsletter from your Sun Cities Historical Society.

Ben Roloff is a Sun Cities historian and member of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trustees.

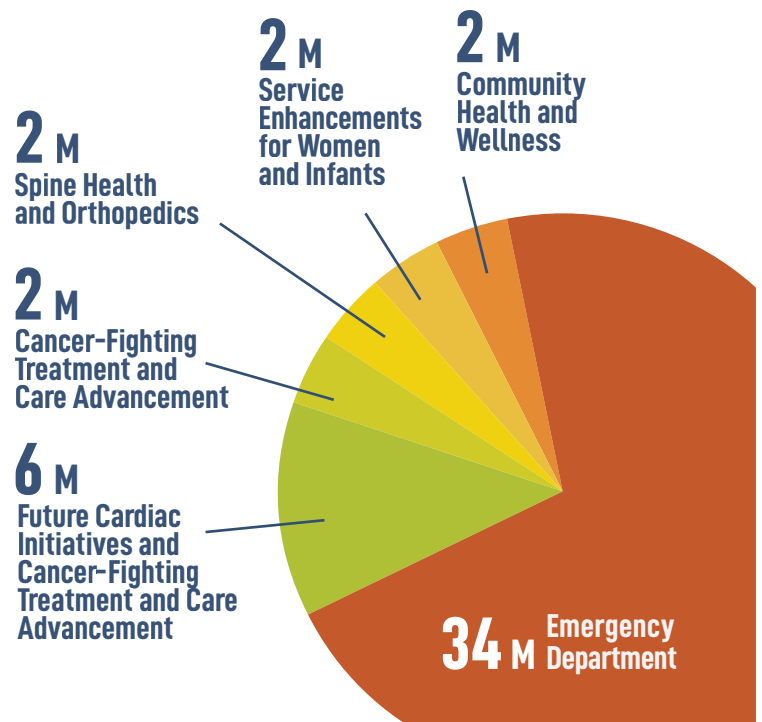


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 www.suncitywest.com



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tion at home and send it in.

Newest exhibit pays tribute to the Sun City Poms

By Edson Allen

*“Gyrating Grannies”
“Sun City’s Sexiest”
“Seniors Gone Wild”
“Cheerleaders for Retirement”...*

These are just some of the headlines that have appeared after performances of the Sun City Poms throughout the U.S.

For 40 years, these talented women have been shattering stereotypes of seniors throughout the country and around the world. They have added an extra energy to “active” retirement living!

A new exhibit at the museum features highlights of the past four decades – a performance at a National Fitness Foundation Award Din-



On hand to open the new Poms exhibit were Pat Weber, Ginger Price, Lori Vaichinger, Joan Sullivan, Alverta Hanson-Diez, Janece Brown, and Sharon Word.

ner, national champions in an International Dance Challenge in Las Vegas, featured in a Japanese TV documentary intended to encourage people in Japan depressed by the earthquake and tsunami in 2011, and more.

On hand to open the

exhibit were Pat Weber, Ginger Price, Lori Vaichinger, Joan Sullivan, Alverta Hanson-Diez, Janece Brown, and Sharon Word. Alverta was an original member of the Poms in 1979 when they began as cheerleaders for the Sun City Saints



The Sun City Poms have often been described as the Sun City’s greatest ambassadors, appearing at events throughout the country.

women’s softball team, and she performed with the Poms for 20 years.

The exhibit will lift your spirits and make you proud of this extraordinary group of “forever young” women.

Ed Allen is a Sun Cities historian and member of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society Board of Trustees.

SC West Rec Card No. 1 donated to museum

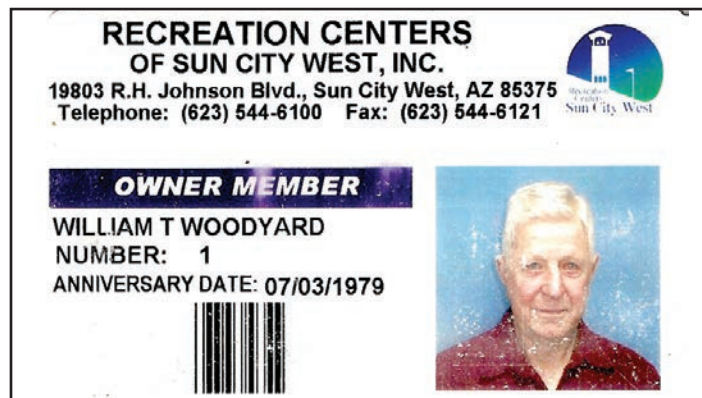
By Edson Allen

William “Bill” Woodward was a remarkable individual playing a dual role: early Sun City West resident and first Rec Center General Manager.

Bill retired as Brigadier General and Dean of Faculty at the Air Force Academy after 38 years of service and settled into Sun City in 1978.

It took him just five days to realize he wasn’t ready for retirement.

Sun City West was underway, and Bill ap-



proached the Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO) about a job. He became the first employee hired for the Rec Centers and soon was

heading it for DEVCO. To be closer to his job, the Woodyards moved to Sun City West in 1979.

An Advisory Board of residents was elected and

Bill worked closely with it for the next 10 years until he retired for good. He was very popular with residents and returned as interim general manager for two six-month periods in 1994 and 1996 while the Governing Board – now run by the residents – looked for new general managers.

Bill’s rec card was donated to the museum by his widow, Imy Woodyard, who lives in Sun City West.



Books Around the Corner

- Located in the Sun City Library (99th & Bell)
- Open 10-4 Monday-Saturday
- Best prices anywhere for new and old books, magazines, puzzles, DVDS & CDS
- 100% volunteer run, all earnings (\$46, 068 in 2018) go back to the Sun City libraries
- Clean, organized, friendly
- Lots of great sales

We love to accept your donations of books, magazines, DVDs, CDs and puzzles
(except VHS tapes, Readers Digest Condensed books, and National Geographic magazines)
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