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'Ambassadors' to promote Sun City's image

By **ROBERT BARRETT**
The Arizona Republic

SUN CITY — Unless the community changes its image with a national promotion campaign, home values could decline sharply, a housing expert says.

"Sun City does not have a good image outside of Sun City," Dick King, president of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, said at a meeting of the Home Owners Association last week.

The Chamber, composed of representatives from Sun City, Sun City West, Youngtown, El

Mirage and Surprise, is backing the formation of the Sun City Ambassadors, a group of 12 residents willing to donate their time and skills to promote a positive image for the community nationwide.

Initially, Sun City was easy to promote because it was the nation's first retirement community designed for an "active lifestyle," which included golf courses and recreation centers, King said.

The community also had the advantage of a massive advertising campaign by the builder, Del E. Webb Communities Inc.

However, with retirement communities sprouting

throughout the state and the Sun Belt, "simply being a retirement community is no longer unique to Sun City," King said.

"This is a different community than it was 27 years ago with Del Webb."

King said Sun City is perceived by many outside the community as being anti-education because it has withdrawn from the Peoria School District and as being anti-child because of the age-restrictive overlay zoning that prohibits residents younger than 18 from living in a home more than 90 days.

One plan to promote the

community would be to offer one-week vacation packages allowing visitors to use the Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc. facilities, King said.

The Ambassadors will not become a reality until after the first of the year when officers will be elected, a staff hired and fund-raising efforts begin, he said.

"It hasn't been firmed up yet," King said.

Kenneth Powers, president of the homeowners group, said the community needs an organization like the Ambassadors.

"We are well-known throughout the country now, but nothing is being done to

continue that," Powers said. "I think it's important that we maintain a good image for Sun City."

In other actions, the Home Owners Association has made no progress in getting the state Transportation Department to change its plan of using 103rd Avenue as an interchange when Grand Avenue improvements are implemented in the 1990s. The association wants the interchange on 99th Avenue.

As part of the expanded freeway system in the Valley, Grand Avenue is scheduled to

become an expressway from Phoenix to Beardsley Road. The initial plan calls for Grand Avenue-access interchanges to be at 111th and 103rd avenues in Sun City.

"We met with Carole Carpenter, last week and we're not making very good progress," Ed Thompson, a director and chairman of the civic-affairs committee, said.

"At this point in time, I don't feel we have much of a chance of changing their (the state's) minds," he said. "But the final decision is still three to five years away."

Ambassadors to Boost Sun City

DURING THE 1970s, Sun City was the hottest-selling resort retirement community in the world. More than 2,000 new homes were being sold annually. And each year another golf course, recreation center or shopping complex was being introduced.

In a decade, the population jumped from 15,000 to 47,000, and the developer's 20-year marketing campaign gave this mecca for retirees national recognition and prominence.

By 1980 Sun City's creator, Del E. Webb Communities, Inc. had introduced and was vigorously promoting its brand new mature adult development, Sun City West.

With the Webb firm leaving little undeveloped acreage in Sun City, residential and commercial growth in the 1980s has been minimal. The resale market over that period has been healthy, with prospective buyers flocking to the area as a result of Webb's marketing efforts for Sun City West, just four miles away.

breakfast meeting.

"Sun City remains the largest mature adult community in the country. It actually offers more residential lifestyle options within its boundaries than when Del Webb was actively marketing it," said King.

"Area realtors in general know that an ongoing marketing effort is essential for Sun City's continuing success. We won't wait for the need to become critical. Keep in mind this was an adult community when it was introduced in 1960—28 years ago in January. We must look at an aging population, a rising vacancy factor, and growing competition. The timing is right for creation of a marketing effort to help produce a demand for the varied lifestyles Sun City offers."

In its promotional campaign, Ambassadors, Inc. will depict Sun City as an established community with diversity and quality in churches, shopping centers, medical facilities, and cultural and leisure opportunities—Sun Bowl, recreation complexes, and golf courses. "We will give wide public recognition to Sun City's Posse, PRIDES, Interfaith Services, Sunshine Services, Museum, Symphony, and its hundreds of other service, recreation and cultural associations and clubs," said King.

Also, the Ambassadors plan to encourage and cultivate greater community unity, in addition to doing image-polishing. "Sun City's population is caring, compassionate and responsible. The community is a tremendous economic asset to the Valley," King stated. "We want these attributes and positive points widely conveyed.

"We are premature to the extent that we don't have a definite location for our Sun City Visitors' Information office. The site will be announced soon. Nor is our marketing program finalized; however, we do have a

But it is more than Sun City West's promotion that is enticing active mature adults to the Northwest Valley. In recent years a number of other developers have introduced communities for those 40 and over on land immediately adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, Sun City. The builders of Desert Harbor, Ventana Lakes, Country Meadows, Westbrook Village, and Sun Village are seeking to discover and meet the lifestyle wants and needs of the rapidly growing, lively, adult population.

Sun City has been a benefactor of the marketing endeavors of others. Now, some Sun City residents and business leaders have decided the time has come to tailor a personalized promotional effort designed to focus on the specific attributes of this community.

Toward this purpose, formation of Sun City Ambassadors, Inc. was officially announced by Ambassadors President Dick King, of Suntown Realty, at the November Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce

Continued on page 12

group of dedicated business and community leaders who are enthusiastic about Sun City and are designing a plan of action to retain its desirability and vitality. A prime thrust will be to attract qualified prospective residents by inviting Arizona and out-of-state visitors to sample Sun City through a vacation package."

Various committees have been created—image, marketing, unity, and a speakers bureau.

Businesses will be asked to participate as paying Sponsors. Residents will be invited to contribute a sum as Envoys. A volunteer corps will be established, drawing from these Sponsors and Envoys.

In addition to King, Ambassadors, board members include: Donnagene Burfield, Sun Cities Area Transit System; Emily Burns, Esq., Case & Bennett; Sam Canepa, Manager, First Interstate Bank (99th & Bell Rd); Bob Dierken, President, Cars 4 U; Ambassadors Treasurer Al Foreman, Manager, United Bank; Louis Grunwald, Recreational Centers of Sun City, Inc; Joe Rossi, Manager, Sun City Prudential Insurance Brokerage; Evelyn Hitchcock, Sun City resident; Pamela Kennedy, Executive Vice President, Sun Health Foundation; Corrine King, Administrator, Plaza del Rio Care Center; Ambassadors Secretary Sue Larkin, CFP, Larkin & Associates; William J. Raymo, P.E. Manager, Sun City Water Company; Ambassadors Vice President Jerry Svendsen, Publisher, *Sun Cities Life Magazine*; Doris Timpano, President's Council; and Phil Vision of Sun City West.

Said King, "This organization is in the shaping process. We are counting on Sun City resident input—their ideas, thoughts, suggestions and energies. Their enthusiasm for, and involvement in, this program is essential. Also, we are working closely with Sun City civic and recreational organizations as we further define our goals and objectives."

Until a location is established and phones installed, calls are being taken by King, 972-0852.



AMBASSADORS PRESIDENT DICK KING and Secretary Sue Larkin meet with press members, from left, Karen Kirk, *Phoenix Gazette*, Red Uldrick, *Sun City Wester*, and Mike Garrett, *Daily News-Sun*, responding to questions about the new organization.

9-16-88

Ambassadors to build visitors center at Bell

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City ambassadors have won recreation centers approval to build a Visitors Center on the grounds of Bell Recreation Center.

The building could be completed by year's end, Ambassadors President Dick King said this week.

"It's not going to be a brick and mortar building," King said. It's going to be something that's movable, that may be temporary for five years.

"It isn't going to mean any dismantling of rec center properties," King said. "We're really concerned about the aesthetic value of this rec center. It (Visitors Center) has to give off warmth. It just can't be a shed."

Denny Ryerson will spearhead the Visitors Center project. He is

president of The Ryerson Co., builders of The Heritage retirement homes in Sun City, Scottsdale and Phoenix.

King said the Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors has only approved a Visitors Center concept, not the actual building size, site or amenities.

Ryerson said Thursday he will continue talking with the recreation centers board to set a site for the Visitors Center somewhere on the Bell Center parking lot.

"We're delighted with their cooperation and the spirit in which they've been working with us," Ryerson said.

"I think we all collectively have one goal in mind and that's to perpetuate continued growth and prosperity within Sun City and Sun City West," Ryerson

said. "My position is of someone who has a significant investment in the area," Ryerson said.

He sees his specific role as contacting various community business people to raise funds for the construction and completion of the center.

"From our business perspective it's to hopefully generate some additional interest on behalf of the business community to contribute to the creation of a Visitors Center for Sun City of a style, quality and type that we think is appropriate for the area."

Ryerson said everyone from area residents to hospital care people to bankers have a "strong vested interest in seeing Sun City prosper, to perpetuate that lifestyle and to communicate the message that Sun City has

communicated over the years — that it is a very unique and special place to live."

King said the Ambassadors also hope to hire a full-time executive director-consultant within the next 30 days to take some of the burden off himself. He is now an auction associate with Larry Mesler Realty and Auctioneers.

King said many Ambassador volunteers are now coming back from summer vacations so the group will start to gear up for its fall fund-raising.

Distribution of Ambassador bumper stickers has been slow with only about 200 contributors so far, King said. The stickers are still available at the Ambassadors office in the Bell Plaza Professional Building South.

King said the Ambassadors have received some response

from the initial distribution of the four-color Sun City brochures printed several months ago.

"We've distributed 15,000 to 18,000 and residents have left here with about a thousand of the brochures on trips back East and to the Midwest. We did get an inquiry letter from Pittsburgh addressed to our post office box so we know they're working."

Once the Visitors Center is finished, King said Ambassador volunteers (and perhaps some paid staff) will make the initial contact with people visiting the area to acquaint them with the recreational facilities, homes and other amenities.

He said the Ambassadors haven't formulated a plan with the Sun City area Realtors on how to proceed after the initial contact.

"The volunteers will sell them on the community and the amenities but that's different than selling them a property."

King thought the Ambassadors might even be entitled to a referral fee from the Realtors if they're instrumental in the selling of a Sun City home. He said the Realtors in turn should consider taking a more active role in the promoting of Sun City. "I think something will be worked out."

Jack Driver, a longtime Sun City Realtor in charge of O'Keefe Real Estate's rental department, said, "The Ambassadors can become our chamber of commerce to the public. We have to recognize the responsibilities we Realtors have in the community."

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Tuesday, March 7, 1989

Home vacancies double, Realtors say



NO ONE HOME — Sun City Realtor Ken Meade said the original asking price of this empty duplex last year was \$85,000. Now

it's down to \$69,000. Meade says Sun City's image has been tarnished by negative publicity.

News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

These conditions
are what motivated
VATED

The Ambassador
Organization

(OVER)

Vacant homes hit record high mark

First of two parts
By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The latest statistics on the number of listed and vacant Sun City area homes on the market reveal an alarming trend, local Realtors say.

An all-time high of 1,929 homes are now listed for sale in the Sun City, Sun City West, Youngtown, Westbrook Village and Country Meadows selling area of the Sun City Area Board of Realtors.

Of that number, 1,260 are Sun City board listings out of a total of about 26,000 Sun City homes.

Of the 1,260 (not counting for-sale-by-owner homes) 583 Sun City properties are now vacant, another record high, said Ken Meade, owner-broker of Ken Meade Realty.

Meade provided the figures from the Sun City Area Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service (MLS) book.

The Feb. 20 MLS book showed 264 vacant single-family Sun City houses of the 651 listed. There also were 319 vacant condominiums of the 609 listed.

The 1,929 total listings as of March 1 were 910 more than the See Home, A5

— From A1

1,005 listings in the January 1987 MLS book, Meade said.

The January 1987 book also showed 662 Sun City homes (338 single-family and 324 condominiums) for sale. At that time, 136 single-family and 183 condominiums were vacant, for a total of 319.

That means almost a 100 percent increase in Sun City listings and vacancies in two years, Meade said.

Tri-Star Realty owner-broker Ken Plein said the vacant homes at least were "moving more briskly than the occupied units, because they're a lot more readily accessible and easier to show."

But Plein said that many of the vacant homes have recently shown lack of ownership pride and have been left in average or below-average condition.

"They've got to keep their property sharp if they're going to expect to sell it," Plein said.

But "they may also have to take a lesser price than anticipated because of the supply-demand ratio," he said.

While the number of homes on the market is up, overall sales are down.

"In 1984, there were 1,738 sales recorded in the December MLS book for the year," Meade said. "In 1988, the same December book recorded 1,511 sales. In four years, we've lost 227 sales with more houses in the area to sell."

Plein said, "We have 110 percent more inventory versus a 20 percent drop in sales. That pendulum cannot swing much further until we get a lot of new, young homebuyers.

"To get people in their late

50s or early 60s, you need attractive properties to compete with the new home sales because the buyer now has such a significant choice," Plein said.

"We've got to convince the public we need new, fresh, people in our community because our median age has popped up to about 74," Plein said. "The way to do that is to welcome these people with open arms and let the buyer feel he's welcome.

"We also have to contain our rec center costs. That means our \$300 transfer fee does not go up, the \$100 rec fee remains stable," Plein said. "If you tell the new buyer he has to come up with another \$500 at closing, he flinches. If those figures escalate, we're going to have a real problem getting more buyers into our market."

Plein said buyers are moving around who are interested in buying properties and have responded to the Valleywide and national advertising his firm has done.

But Sid Menk, new president of the Sun City Ambassadors, said it's difficult for Sun City to compete with the surrounding new retirement communities that spend \$1 million or more a year advertising their communities.

Meade agreed advertising, or the lack of it, plays a role.

"Where do you think Coca-Cola would be today if it hadn't spent any money advertising the past 10 years?" Meade asked.

Meade said the market figures indicate that Sun City isn't getting its message out of state as it should. That's because the community hasn't been marketed since Del Webb Communities Inc. left in 1978 with its annual million-dollar advertising budget.

"This is the trend that's in place," Meade said. "Also, the average market time (the time a home is on the market before it is sold) used to be 89 days a couple of years ago. Now, our average market time for the (single-family) homes is 125 days. For condos it's a 159-day average. But it's not uncommon for condos to be on the market for 300 days or longer.

"We have to get the message to the public that their (Sun City) house has gone down in value," Meade said.

He said he took the seven more popular Sun City Phase II and Phase III single-family and condominium home models' average selling price in December 1984, '86 and '88 and averaged them out.

"What I came out with was there were 244 sales involved," Meade said. "The average of those 244 sales had lost an average price of \$7,425."

Because of an oversupply of homes on the market, Meade said the community needs "to take the message of how great the Sun Cities are to Albany N.Y., Terre Haute, Ind., Minneapolis and other places.

"We need to have them see what we've got and get them to come and take a look at it. If we could do that, this whole thing would change."

That of course is going to take a lot more promotional money than the \$15,000 the Sun City Ambassadors raised last year, Menk said. But how much money will be needed and where will it come from?

Next: Menk tells how he hopes to get community-wide support for promoting Sun City and where the Ambassadors will try to raise the promotional funds.

OVER

A4 Community Saturday, March 18, 1989 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

Webb donates check, renews SC backing

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors received a check for \$5,000 Thursday from Del Webb Communities Inc. to be used as "seed money" in the Ambassadors' promotional campaign of Sun City.

Ambassadors President Sid Menk accepted the check from Chuck Roach, manager of Sun City West and a Webb vice president, at the regular Thursday meeting in the Am-

bassadors' Bell Plaza Professional Building office. The amount nearly doubled the Ambassadors' present operating budget.

In presenting the check, Roach said Del Webb Communities is "in general agreement with your objectives and we want to support your organization."

He said Webb will continue to support their efforts, recognizing the company has a "moral obligation" to its original Sun City.

Roach said Webb's current \$1.5-million advertising and marketing campaign efforts are geared toward the selling of both Sun Cities.

Webb executives have acknowledged concern recently over declining property values and a significant increase in the number of homes on the Sun City market. They are concerned that their original Sun City should never be thought of as anything but successful as an

active adult retirement community, Roach said.

Roach also outlined some suggestions for what the Ambassadors should do in developing specific goals and objectives they could use in their future promotional campaign.

"I pledge to you that I will do whatever I can to help you in your efforts," Roach said. He said that one of Webb's primary objectives is to eliminate the antagonism and polarization

that has developed over the years between Sun City and Sun City West residents.

Roach and the Ambassadors agreed that Sun City has to take steps to improve the negative image it has in the Valley. He said all of the other Webb Sun Cities have nothing but a positive image in the cities in which they're located.

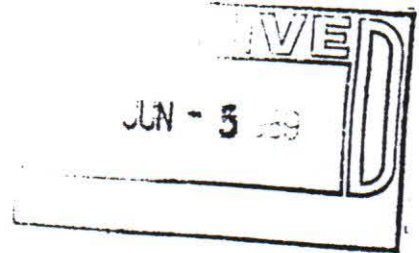
He said residents also should do something "to tear down the

walls of isolationism" the community has built up over the years.

Ambassador Advisory Committee Chairman Denny Ryerson reported he is making progress in his negotiations to find the Ambassadors a more visible office location with a favorable lease. He said an agreement could be signed in a couple of weeks at a location near 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

THE
RYERSON COMPANY

June 2, 1989



Mr. Ray Danford, President
RECREATION CENTERS OF SUN CITY, INC.
10626 West Thunderbird Blvd.
Sun City, Arizona 85351

Dear Mr. Danford:

Jerry Svendson, the Sun City Ambassadors' Board, and I would like to thank you for providing the opportunity to meet with the Rec Centers' Board several weeks ago. We feel, as you do, that it is important for us to work together for the future of Sun City.

Certainly, the Rec Centers' Board plays a vital role in managing the Sun City Rec Center facilities. These facilities form the "heart" of Sun City, making your task crucial to our Community's future.

The Ambassadors' Board has identified several areas of concern. These include:

1. The deterioration of some of the existing physical facilities;
2. The high turnover in commercial real estate and apparent failure of local business enterprises; and
3. The decline of home values.

The Ambassadors are committed to finding solutions to these problems and have developed strategies to address underlying causes.

First, we believe active promotion of Sun City as a success story in retirement living is required.

Second, we believe a centralized location is needed for the dissemination of information about Sun City, whether locally, regionally or nationally. The establishment of a highly visible and credible Visitor's Center would serve to renew the focus for the marketing of Sun City as a success-tested adult community.

Mr. Ray Danford, President
Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc.
June 2, 1989
Page 2

Third, the establishment of a Vacation Visitor's Program would bring many outside visitors into Sun City to experience for themselves the vibrant lifestyle available here.

As important as the future of Sun City is, we believe it is critical that we begin immediately to meet the challenge of providing for a successful future. Like any organization in its infancy, we must obtain financial support to achieve the goals we have set. Consequently, we request that the Recreation Centers of Sun City consider a \$10,000 contribution to The Sun City Ambassadors. These funds would provide much needed and timely support for the Ambassadors' "start-up expenses" and enable us to begin presenting our Community in a more positive light.

The program outlined above will provide continued financial support for the Rec Centers as each new resident will contribute an immediate \$300.00 toward Rec Center operations plus annual membership and user fees.

We hope that you will realize the importance of the Ambassadors' program and the necessity of Rec Center financial support and participation.

Again, we thank you for permitting us to speak to your Board and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Denny Ryerson

DR:nh

Copy: AMBASSADOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Mr. Hank Raymond, Sun Health Foundation
Mr. Chuck Roach, Del Webb Corporation
Mr. Austin Turner, Sun Health Foundation
Mr. Sam Marocco, Daily News Sun

Mr. Ray Danford, President
Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc.
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Mr. Joe Rossi, Director

Ambassadors find a place to call home

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors have found a home.

The group, set up to promote Sun City, signed a 2½-year lease with Westcor Inc. Friday to put its Sun City Visitors Center in the old Coldwell Banker real estate office at the east end of The Promenade Shopping Center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

The Ambassadors will share the 1,368 square feet of office space with the Sun City office of Harris Trust Bank.

Ambassadors officials said Monday they hope to have the office open by late August.

Ambassador executive committee chairman Denny Ryerson was the chief negotiator in obtaining the office. The president of The Ryerson Co., which built the Heritage retirement apartments in Sun City, said the Ambassadors wanted the visitors center "to be a very quality oriented facility that's going to be the focal point for distribution of information materials about Sun City."

"The establishment of this visitors center is a symbol of the revitalization of Sun City," Ryerson said. "It will be a visi-

ble reminder that Del Webb's premier retirement community is still a place to live the good life affordably.

"It will be a place for anybody coming to town to know they can come here for information on Sun City," he said.

"It will provide a much-needed distribution point for information and literature showcasing our many attractions and encouraging Sun City visitors to become permanent residents," said Mortimer Reed, Ambassadors board secretary and a Sun City Home Owners Association board member.

The Ambassadors have received funds to operate the center and volunteer support from area businesses and residents.

The group is planning a fund-raising campaign in the fall, including a variety show Oct. 29 in the Sun Bowl to help reacquaint residents with the Sun City amenities.

Ambassador Bob Turner, who also serves on the Sun City Recreation Centers board, said substantial contributions have come from Merabank, Ryerson-Heritage, Sun Health Foundation, Ken Meade Realty, Plaza del Rio and Del Webb Corp. to help finance the venture.



News-Sun photo by Patrick Knight

LEASED OUT — The Sun City Ambassadors have signed a 2½-year lease to locate the Sun City Visitors Center in the old Coldwell Banker office on the east end of The Prom-

Ryerson said the lease signing accomplishes the Ambassadors' first goal of establishing a visitors center in Sun City.

"We think we have done as good a job in location, visibility and credibility for something as important as a Sun City Visitors

Center," he said.

Turner and Ryerson said they also were pleased they could locate the center next to the Bell Recreation Center, which had been the original target location.

As Sun City's largest recreation center, Bell Center is a

nade Shopping Center. Tearing up the "for lease" sign are, from left, Ambassadors Denny Ryerson, Bob Turner, Al Foreman and Ken Meade.

popular stop for the many groups that tour Sun City. The Ambassadors are now operating an information desk at Bell to distribute their Sun City literature. Other Ambassadors literature is available at the Sun City Home Owners Association office, 10401 W. Coggins Drive, and

Ken Meade Realty, 14650 N. Del Webb Blvd.

The Ambassadors hope to eventually be able to coordinate all Sun City tours as well as offer vacation packages to prospective residents similar to the promotion Webb Communities ran when it built Sun City.

Group putting new wrinkle in Sun City

Visitors center designed to spur sales of homes

By Holly D. Remy
The Arizona Republic

7/12/89

Age has shrunk Sun City, leaving the community with wrinkles and worry lines.

In recent years, the population has grown smaller, the average age has climbed to 73, and the pace of home sales, once the fastest in the Valley, has slowed to a limp.

Now, the Sun City Ambassadors want to turn back the calendar to Sun City's carefree younger days.

In a plan that seems more tactic than tact, the 3-year-old group is setting up a visitors center to snare potential retirement-home buyers who otherwise might slip away to competing communities.

The visitors center is expected to open by mid-September. It will bubble with charm and friendliness in the Promenade Shopping Center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

Its mission: to divert the non-stop parade of taillights that since 1978 has marched toward Sun City's well-promoted sister community, Sun City West.

"This is the world's premier retirement community," Bob Turner, an Ambassadors Executive Committee member, said Thursday outside the storefront that will become the visitors center.

"This is the place people come to spend the rest of their lives on vacation," he said.

To live in Sun City, at least one member of a household must be 50 years old. No one under age 18 can

live there more than 30 days without permission from the Sun City Home Owners Association.

In its youthful years, the early 1960s, Sun City was touted in national magazines and newspapers as the innovative brainchild of Del Webb Corp. because it combined retirement homes and endless forms of recreation, something that had never been done.

The company squired potential buyers through the neighborhoods and recreation centers. The buyers bought. During the early 1970s, they snapped up more than 2,000 homes a year.

The population had swelled to 47,000 by the time Del Webb finished building the community in the late 1970s. But in recent years, more people have been leaving Sun City than have been coming there to live, and the population is estimated at roughly 45,000.

"Since Del Webb moved out of Sun City in 1978, it has been promoting Sun City West," said Ken Meade, an Ambassadors director and president of Ken Meade Realty.

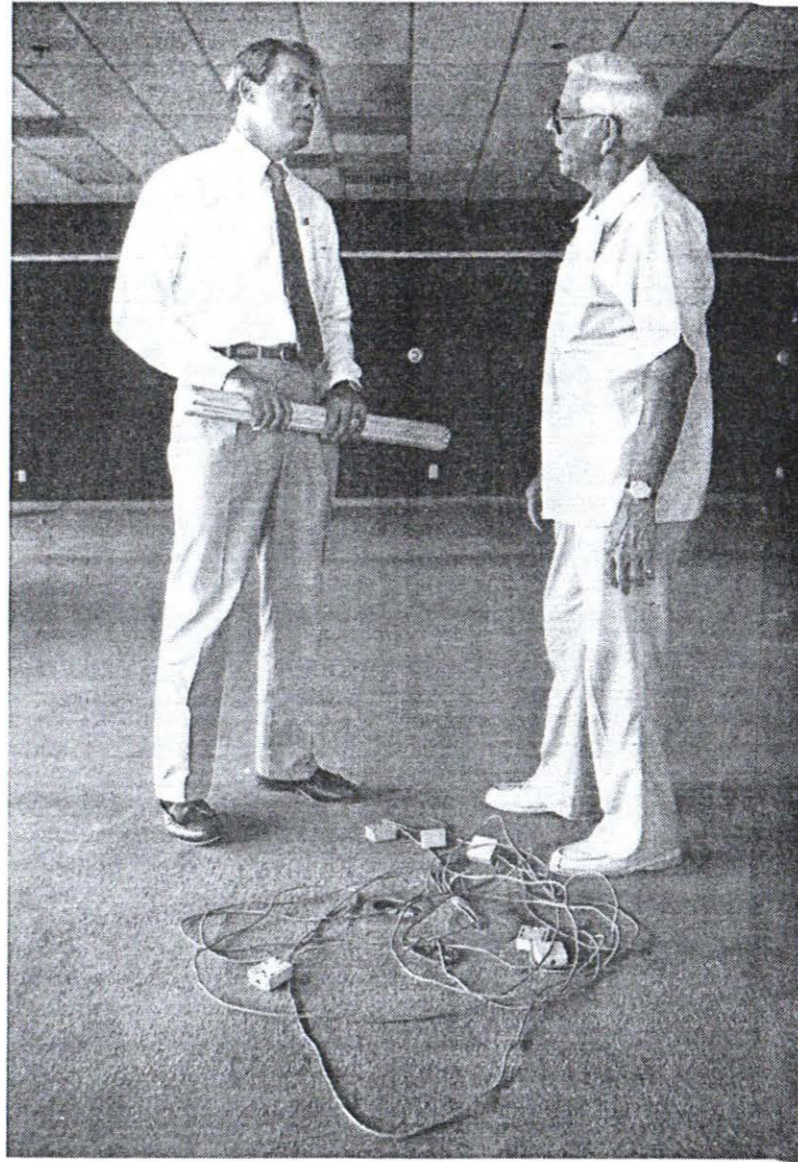
"People go to see Sun City West, and we more or less get the crumbs. We have no industry that attracts large numbers of people, and we have no births, but what many people don't realize is that Sun City is itself an industry."

A new Ambassadors brochure notes that 10 shopping centers, 44 banks, 26 churches, 10 stock brokerages, two hospitals and countless medical clinics have sprung up solely to serve Sun City residents.

But it is home-buying that the Ambassadors want to sell.

"What we want to accomplish is to

— See **SUN CITY**, page 4



Michael Meister/The Arizona Republic

Ambassadors board member Bob Turner (right) discusses plans for the visitors center with Denny Ryerson, who helped obtain space for the facility.

— **SUN CITY**, from page 1

promote the Sun City lifestyle," Turner said.

He said that the community has been hurt by a popular notion that many Sun City homeowners have a split-level social conscience, donating time and money to children in nearby Surprise and El Mirage but then retreating behind whitewashed walls to a child-free environment.

To dispel such ideas, the Ambassadors will pull out all the stops at the center.

A videotape and slide show will introduce visitors to the community, Meade said.

Racks will display fliers and brochures about area recreation and culture.

Volunteer guides, called envoys, will conduct personalized tours of the neighborhoods and recreation centers as Del Webb sales people once did.

Seasonal residents will be encouraged to take brochures about Sun City wherever they spend the summer. All residents will be invited to a rally in support of the community on Oct. 29.

Money to pay for the activities will come from memberships that the Ambassadors intend to sell, Meade said. The membership prices have not yet been determined.

"The important thing is the involvement of the residents, just like they are involved with the Sun City Prides and the Sheriff's Posse," he said.

The Prides patrol the streets twice a week to pick up litter, and the posse helps the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office patrol the streets daily for lawbreakers. Both groups are made up of residents who are volunteers.

Early donations building up for Ambassadors

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Several businesses in the Northwest Valley have come forward with donations of time, labor and materials to help make the Sun City Ambassadors' new Visitors Center operational.

The Ambassadors don't expect to launch their major fundraising drive until October. But initial Visitors Center contributions so far have added up to about \$8,500 largely through volunteer suppliers who recognize the center's future value in promoting this area.

Contributing their expertise and materials to the Visitors Center on the northeast corner of The Promenade Shopping Center, Bell Road and 99th Avenue, are Browner Building & Design in Surprise, Palmer's Plumbing and Andy's Electric in Youngtown and House of Tiles in Peoria.

Former MeraBank Sun City area manager Paul Eskew has donated much of the interior furnishings.

In addition, Ken Meade Realty of Sun City-Sun City West has provided a telephone system that is being installed by Andy Paul, a retired AT&T Telephone Pioneer from Sun City West. The Telephone Pioneers Club is a group of retired telephone company life members.

"We just volunteered to do this to help the Ambassadors," Paul said. "We will do the installation of all the office's telephones."

General contractor Phil Browner, owner of Browner Building & Design, has probably the largest investment — several thousand dollars worth. He said he is fireproofing and finishing the dividing walls and partitions separating the Visitors Center from Harris Trust, which will share the old Coldwell Banker office with the Ambassadors. Browner also will supervise the overall project and take care of the legal permits.

Rob Freund of Palmer's Plumbing is doing all the plumbing for the bathroom, vanity and coffee room.

Andy's Electric owner Paul "Andy" Andresen is rearranging the lighting and wiring and will install new electrical outlets.

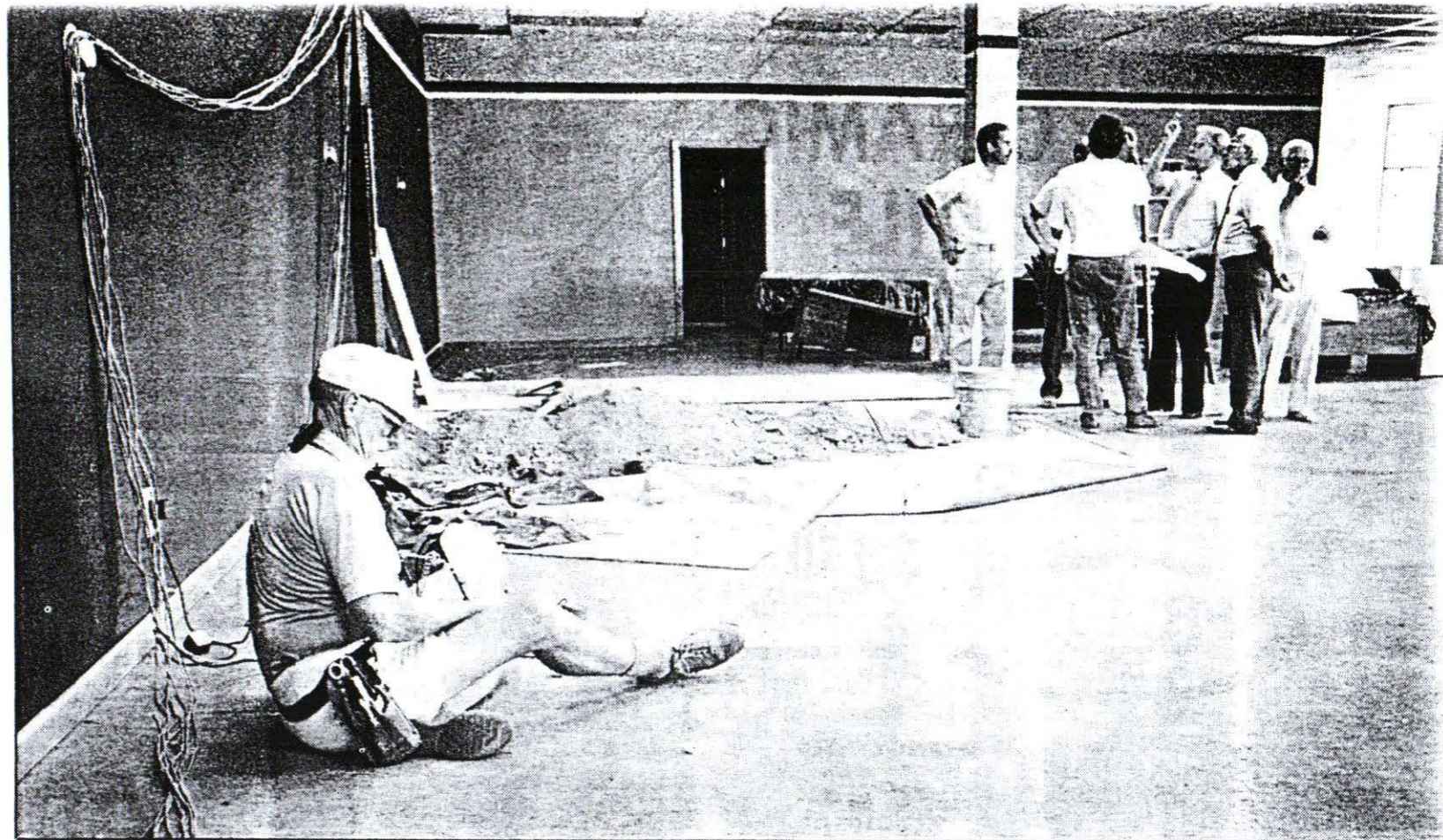
With all the donations, Ambassador Executive Committee member Ken Meade said the original opening of mid-September will remain on schedule.

He said the Visitors Center still needs paint and a painter, carpeting and an installer, plants, lamps and other decorations, plus various office equipment, including a working copier.

"The Ambassadors are especially pleased with this generous response from our neighbors outside Sun City," Meade said. "It is an indication of the tremendous surge of support we are receiving in providing a rallying point for Sun City's revitalization."

OVER

News-Sun Aug 3/89



News-Sun photos by Stephen Chern...

LENDING A HAND — Andy Paul of Sun City West finds a spot on the floor to work on the telephone system in the Sun City Visitors Center, on 99th Avenue and Bell Road. Below, Phil Browner, left, of Browner Building and Design, talks over the blueprints for the project with Ken Meade and Bob Turner of the Ambassadors.



Visitors center in Sun City nears completion with gifts

By Holly D. Remy
The Arizona Republic

Tradition holds that neighbors welcome the new guy on the block with casseroles and cookies.

But the Sun City Ambassadors' neighbors have thrown tradition out the window, instead bringing tile, furniture and electrical wiring.

The Ambassadors, a group formed three years ago to promote Sun City, recently announced plans to open a visitors center in the Promenade Shopping Center at Bell Road and 99th Avenue.

The purpose of the center is to convince prospective home buyers that Sun City is a good place to live.

"We're getting assistance that we

didn't expect from business people in the surrounding communities," Bob Turner, an Ambassadors executive-committee member, said Tuesday.

The visitors center is expected to open by mid-September.

It will stock fliers and brochures about recreation and culture and will offer a videotape and a slide show to introduce visitors to Sun City.

Volunteer guides, called envoys, will conduct tours of the neighborhoods and recreation centers. The Ambassadors hope to launch a fund-raising campaign this fall to finance visitors-center activities.

Meanwhile, the group is accepting

— See VISITORS, page D

Visitors center near completion, with some help

— VISITORS, from page A

donations to renovate its leased space, next to a Harris Trust Bank branch.

Among the donors are:

- Browner Building and Design, Surprise, construction of a fireproof wall between the visitors center and the bank and building of partitions.

- Palmer Plumbing, Youngtown, installation of a restroom and a refreshment area.

- Andy's Electric, Youngtown, installation of electrical wiring.

- House of Tiles, Peoria, installation of counter tops, wainscoting, and ceramic tile for the restroom and entry.

- Ken Meade Realty, Sun City, providing a telephone system to be installed by Andy Paul, a Sun City West retiree.

- Bob Brown Air Conditioning, Peoria, relocation of air-conditioning ducts.

"We still need carpeting, and we still need people to do some painting for us," Turner said.

Local groups reaching out to senior tours

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors, Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce and local Realtors are starting their fall push to promote the community by trying to reach out to the many senior tour groups crisscrossing the United States.

The Ambassadors, chamber members and various Realtors say they're trying to ensure that the Sun Cities and surrounding communities are a main stop-over so the tourists may see firsthand why the Sun Cities are considered the retirement capital of the world.

They are now trying to work together to lay the groundwork for the more than 20 senior tours that have expressed an interest in coming to the Sun Cities over the next six months.

"We are the premier adult retirement communities in the world and more people need to realize that," said Tom McCanna, chamber executive director. "If there was a Super Bowl championship of retirement communities, we would win, period. We would win because there would be a huge team effort coming together to get the ball across the goal line.

"We're not taking a backseat to anyone," he said. "We have certain bragging rights established over 30 years."

The chamber is also gearing up to send members to the more important national senior expos where they will man booths and distribute brochures and maps.

Mailings to tour groups and expos have already started.

"At the end of July we sent some of our brochures up to Sacramento (California) to a senior show attended by about 5,000 people," said McCanna. "On Nov. 3-5 in Los Angeles, there is a prime-time expo for seniors. We will have a booth set up where last year 100,000 seniors went through."

On Nov. 10-Nov. 12, San Diego has a seniors expo that annually attracts 25,000 to 50,000 people. And on Oct. 1, the chamber will have its former president, Chuck Rogness, in Sioux Falls, S.D.

"A special list is being made of the hotels and restaurants in the area and some of the things the people can do when they visit.

"The reason we're going after the senior tour groups is they set up tours of 20 to 40 people at a time who might be interested in

'If a tour comes in from Michigan we're going to have people from Michigan go on the tour bus and tell them about the Sun Cities. We also want to introduce them to Peoria and Glendale, too.'

Tom McCanna
Northwest Valley Chamber

eventually moving to our area," McCanna said. "The reason for the maps and brochures is that we want to show everybody everywhere we have more than just cotton fields and golf courses in the Northwest Valley."

The chamber coordinated six senior tours last year and are in discussions for 11 tours scheduled from November through April, said McCanna, who will be in San Antonio, Texas, this week.

"We made a study where most of the people come from who live here and we're targeting those areas the heaviest. We have a

lot of people from California who live here now so we're targeting that market heavily."

Anna Krzywiec, Windmill Inn marketing director and chamber membership chairman, said she will be in the Chicago, Milwaukee, Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, British Columbia metropolitan areas over the next few weeks as part of her Windmill and chamber promotional efforts.

Sun Ridge Retirement Community people have also been doing the same thing.

Bob Turner, a member of the Ambassadors executive board, has been talking to Chicago-based Lampert Tours and its Retirement Concepts division to ensure their senior tours will include the Sun Cities on their itinerary.

"So far we have scheduled nine for the next year," Turner said. "They will visit Sun City along with other Arizona retirement areas."

Turner said Retirement Concepts has had more than 6,000 responses from a series of magazine articles asking new retirees about their retirement area preferences.

"What it's all about is to look before you retire. They'll come

out and look at the Sun Cities, Vistoso in Tucson, Leisure World and Sun Lakes.

"We'll have a chance to show them around Sun City, meet with them and give them a media presentation."

Turner hopes those tours will start at the new Ambassadors Visitors Center at The Promenade Shopping Center, Bell Road and 99th Avenue.

Because the office's construction is mostly through volunteer help and it's still lacking carpets and cabinets, Ambassador spokesman Ken Meade said the office probably will not open until sometime in October. The drywall and plumbing should be finished in a few days, he said.

Turner said he and other Ambassadors likely will lead the tours.

"We may give them a video cassette on the start and history of Sun City. Then we'll probably show them the recreation centers, golf courses and have a few open houses so they can see the kinds of places for sale here."

Sun City Area Board of Realtors executive officer Nancy Gray said the Realtors will cooperate in that respect, trying to find a good cross section of six to

eight open houses and retirement centers for showing.

McCanna said that his people will not be trying to sell houses but a lifestyle in keeping with Del Webb sales tradition.

Turner said he feels residents will cooperate in welcoming tour groups to their communities, noting that many have asked how they can help. Some have already served as Sun City tour spokesmen.

"We're trying to coordinate everything and not duplicate efforts," McCanna said. "It has to be a team effort."

"If a tour comes in from Michigan we're going to have people from Michigan go on the tour bus and tell them about the Sun Cities. We also want to introduce them to Peoria and Glendale, too."

McCanna said all the people working to promote this area can't let their own egos and agendas stand in the way.

"I don't care who gets credit for what. I don't want the credit to fall on me or somebody else. It's that team that scored the points. We have to work together in order to survive."

Rally gets Sun Citians fired up over promotion

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — It was show and tell in the Sun Bowl Saturday afternoon.

The Sun City Ambassadors told their story and residents showed off musical, vocal and dancing skills.

The 1,500 spectators basking in the late-day sun loved it. Some may have been there for the entertainment, but they went away with a mission, according to the hosts.

"You are all ambassadors," said master of ceremonies Jerry Svendsen. The refrain was echoed by Sid Menk, Ambassador president.

"Businesses and residents, we need you . . . it's a great place to live," said Svendsen, who as a Del Webb Corp. employee did his first master of ceremonies stint in the Sun Bowl on Nov. 28, 1966 — the day the entertainment center was dedicated.

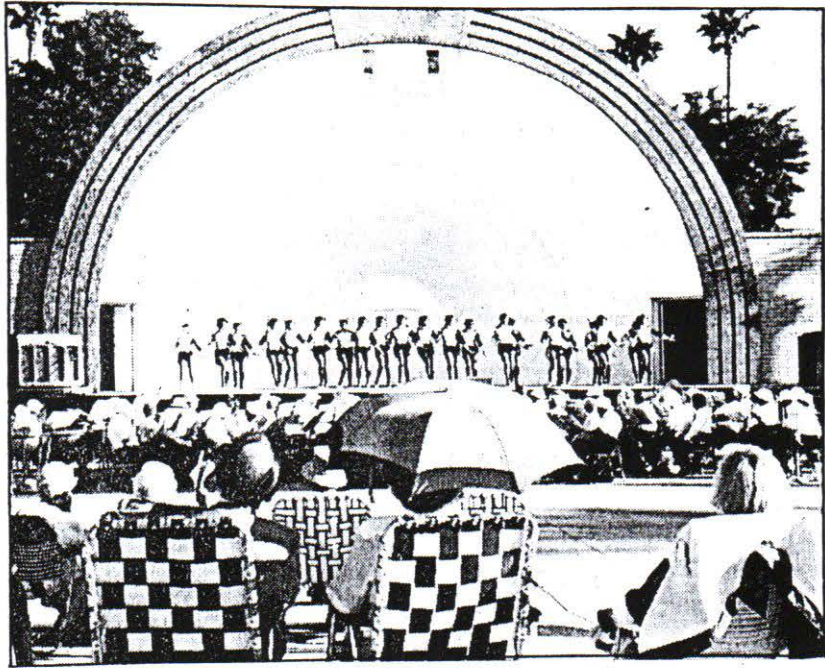
"When Del Webb moved out, Sun City began to play Rip Van Winkle," Menk said. "Sun City is now in competition (with other communities) for the four percent of the population who choose to move to retirement communities," Menk said.

Awards were given Saturday to merchants and contractors who provided the remodeling and fixtures for the new Sun City Visitor Center, which opened Sunday in the Promenade Center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

While negotiating leases for the conversion of the center, the Ambassadors were provided space by Helmsley-Spear National Realty.

Menk introduced the Ambassador's officers, vice president Svendsen, secretary Mortimer Reed and treasurer Tom Nash, and gave credit to individual board members for their contributions.

Enjoying the show from a seat down front on the grass was volunteer Lilah Sommers, who has been working in the office for 1½ years. She greets guests



Daily News-Sun photo by P. Atwood Williams

RALLY FOR AMBASSADORS — About 1,500 people Saturday enjoyed entertainment provided by the Sun City Ambassadors in the Sun Bowl. On stage are the Sun City Steppers.

with a smile and encourages them to move to Sun City.

"I hope I'm doing something for the community. I send out brochures and schedule the VCRs for people wishing to show videos to friends from back home," she said.

Resident Marie Atwood said: "The visitor center is a great idea. We need to do something. We've gotten sleepy."

Sid Huntley agrees that Sun City has needed the Ambassadors for a long time to "make us more widely known and bring in more people."

"If they carry through with half the things they're planning, we've got it made," Lou Loobey said of the Ambassadors.

"It's great to have some place to bring visitors," said Perry Simmons. "I plan to bring my brother-in-law in to the visitors center."

"We need a lot more younger people to use our facilities," Ray Lockwood said. "Many of us are too old to play golf, and others have moved into retirement

homes."

"The Ambassadors are needed. I'm glad they're here. The advertising sort of fell down. I plan to volunteer to help," said Maggie Lockwood, former director of a senior citizens center who once brought a busload of people to visit Sun City.

For the show portion of the rally Saturday afternoon, the Sun City Concert Band, directed by Walter Mack, performed several selections, the Sun City Steppers strutted and tapped through several numbers, soprano Barbara Schiefelbein sang "Happy," "The Sounds of Music" and "Make Someone Happy" and Sun Cities Symphony musician W. Bob Roberts performed two numbers on the trumpet.

Earlier, songwriter/entertainer Johnny "Dutch" Schultz led the group in singing "God Bless America," "America the Beautiful" and his own composition, "Sun City, City of Beauty."

Ambassadors christen new visitors center

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Visitors Center officially opened for business Sunday afternoon.

Residents and Sun City Ambassadors were on hand for the occasion to see Maricopa County Supervisor Carole Carpenter cut the ribbon and culminate a three-year effort by the Ambassadors, area businessmen and Sun City volunteers.

"This is the end of the beginning," said Ambassador President Sid Menk. He said the center, at the east corner of the Promenade Shopping Center 99th Avenue and Bell Road, belongs to the residents and will be used by the Ambassadors and their volunteer staff as a promotional vehicle for Sun City.

Office manager-volunteer director Norma Pitcairn said she has a staff of 120 volunteers to help her operate the center. It will be open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Telephone numbers are 977-5000 or 974-4021. Pitcairn said she is still looking for more volunteers.

Sun Citizens sampled the center Sunday by checking out the many available promotional

brochures or viewing one of three videos in the special video room.

Next-door neighbor Harris Trust Bank also will make its conference room available to the Ambassadors.

The videos depict the Sun City story that was done several months ago by Channel 5, an updated version of an old Del Webb Sun City promotional tape and one done on Arizona by former Sen. Barry Goldwater.

The Ambassadors hope residents will make free use of the Visitors Center by sending the promotional items to their friends and relatives in hometowns.

The Visitors Center also will be a stopover for the many tour groups expected to come through the area in the next year starting in December.

Bob Turner, Ambassadors tour coordinator and board member, said he has at least 11 tours lined up between December and May.

Tom McCanna, executive director of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber has another nine or so tours scheduled for the same

period. He said the chamber will help coordinate the tours through the Ambassadors.

Funding the center to keep it open is the next major hurdle facing the Ambassadors. Turner estimates that any major fund drive will have to depend on residents' contributions.

"If every Sun City home gave \$25 a year it would completely fund our center," Turner said. "If our promotional efforts raised their property values by \$1,000, that would more than offset their contributions."

Menk said: "If we can promote the Sun City lifestyle, that will boost the real estate values here. In that respect, most of the Realtors here have been very supportive of us."

Martha Moyer, spokeswoman for Del Webb Communities Inc., builder of Sun City, said Webb will be working closely with the Ambassadors as part of Webb's own recently launched campaign to build Sun City's image. This summer Webb donated \$5,000 in seed money to the Ambassadors.

Moyer said additional funds from that campaign likely will be made available to the Ambassadors in the future.



Daily News-Sun photo by Mike Garrett

VISITORS CENTER OPENS — Sun City Ambassadors President Sid Menk, standing on chair, left, addresses the crowd Sunday at the opening of the Sun City Visitors Center. Next to Menk from left, are Pitre Chrysler-Plymouth General Manager Jack

Finley, Ambassador board member Betty Joachim, Ryerson Co. President Denny Ryerson, Maricopa County Dist. 4 Supervisor Carole Carpenter and Paul Eskew, former MeraBank Sun City regional manager.

Webb joins effort to promote SC

By LAURIE HURD-MOORE
Sun Cities Independent

The Sun Cities may be Arizona's best kept secret.

Looking to spread the good word about the retirement communities it founded and developed, the Del Webb Corporation has announced plans for a major campaign to promote the Sun Cities.

Webb Corporate officials announced Oct. 24 they would be funding a two-part Sun Cities program designed to build a positive image of Sun City and Sun City West.

Beginning in 1990, Webb will spend \$250,000 to promote the Sun Cities, says

Chuck Roach, Del Webb general manager for Sun City West.

Handled by the corporation's public relations department, "The Sun Cities Care" promotion is designed to inform other Valley communities of the positive things being done by residents of the Sun Cities.

Webb also plans to sponsor tours and encourage local volunteer groups to interact with other Valley communities.

The news is encouraging to another local group organized to promote Sun City.

"We see this as a positive. This has to benefit us," says

Ken Meade, director of the Sun City Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors is a non-profit corporation, dedicated to promoting and revitalizing the Sun City image throughout the United States.

Whereas most of Webb's efforts will be concentrated on building a positive image of the Sun Cities here in the Valley of the Sun, the Ambassadors are looking to promote Sun City nationally.

The group recently opened the Sun City Visitors Center in the Promenade Shopping Mall.

Webb's general manager

See EFFORTS, page 24

• EFFORT

From page one

says they plan to work closely with the Ambassadors organization, providing research material and writing assistance.

"We've made them cognitive of the fact there is a problem," says Mr. Meade.

"The number of houses (for sale) has been rising, but the resale has been shrinking." "Fortunately," he adds, "we may have hit bottom. Sales are five to 10 percent ahead of last year."

Still, he says, residents are the "biggest investors" in Sun City and they, too, should be assisting the Ambassadors.

"It is like purchasing a \$60,000 certificate of deposit.

"Five years later, the C.D. holder goes back to the bank and the bank says they'll give them \$45,000 for it. The person would be shocked.

"This is happening with the home values out here," Mr. Meade explains "Residents need to support our efforts."

The Sun City group is currently conducting a fundraiser to enlist the fixed financial support of area businesses.

Residents, are also being asked to volunteer their time and/or their money to assist in activities such as the distribution of flyers and brochures.

This literature promoting Sun City is directed at all 50 states, says Mr. Meade.

Mr. Roach agrees with Mr. Meade. The ultimate and eventual responsibility of promoting the Sun Cities will be left up to the homeowners.

"We envision the \$250,000 (the overall Sun Cities Care budget) to be seed money," he says.

"This is something to get the program started.

"We want the people and the groups to carry the project on indefinitely," says the general manager.

Promoting Sun City

Ambassadors', Webb's programs don't compete

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors and Del Webb Corp.'s new Sun Cities Care Program basically have the same mutual goals.

But the Ambassadors needed some reassurance that the \$250,000 Webb program wasn't going to duplicate or eliminate their best intentions.

Nothing could be further from the truth, according to Webb officials, who want to clear up any misunderstandings that their new public image campaign may have created in the eyes of the Ambassadors and residents.

Ambassadors President Sid Menk raised the issue because neither he nor Ambassador board members were consulted about the outreach program prior to its public unveiling last month at a Webb dinner.

The cares program is designed to improve the Sun Cities image in the rest of the Valley. But it's not designed to financially promote Sun City nationally, said Webb officials.

"Some of the Ambassadors were wondering what was going on," said Menk. "Some people said if Del Webb is going to do this, what purpose do the Ambassadors have? It occurred to us that we needed some clarity as to what our relationship is with Webb, how the Ambassadors relate to their program and how Webb relates to the Ambassadors.

"Without denigrating Sun City West I think our eventual destiny should be together," said Menk. "We have to play catch-up ball. In this arrangement it's very important that we have interconnection and interplay so that the right hand knows what the left hand does and that we are co-equal partners."

Menk said the Ambassadors don't have Webb's capital but they do have the residents' support in trying to promote Sun City.

Ken Plonski, Webb Corp. director of public and community relations, stressed that the Ambassadors are an integral

'What we need to do now is plant a seed. I think without our direct involvement, the Ambassadors are in a way that seed. They are assuming the role of promoting these communities that Del Webb has done in the past. In essence really, it is up to the residents of these communities to nurture that seed along.'

**Ken Plonski
Webb director of public
and community relations**

part of the cares program now that Webb is refocusing its corporate efforts on developing active adult retirement communities.

"We have to ensure Sun City continues to prosper because it's always going to be associated with Del Webb," said Plonski. "The image of that community and its future is very closely tied to the future of the Del Webb Corp. We have to make sure that the legacy of Sun City is a very positive one."

But enhancing the communities' public image and supporting them financially after buildout are incongruous. Plonski and Sun City West General Manager Chuck Roach said they hoped that Sun City West will eventually have its own Ambassadors to promote that community after Webb pulls out in three to four years.

Likewise, they say it will be up to the residents to help fund any promotional campaigns because Webb will be building its

Sun Cities elsewhere and its first priority is to make money for its shareholders.

"The 30-year commitment we've had to these communities up to this point is unmatched in the annals of development," said Plonski. "What we need to do now is plant a seed."

"I think without our direct involvement, the Ambassadors are in a way that seed. They are assuming the role of promoting these communities that Del Webb has done in the past. In essence really, it is up to the residents of these communities to nurture that seed along."

"We have supported the Ambassadors from the start and will continue to support the Ambassadors in whatever ways we can because of what they're doing in promoting these communities," said Plonski.

Menk said Webb has reassured him of its commitment and thinks the two will work closely together in future years.

Plonski said he and Roach are planning to sit down with the Ambassadors executive board on a regular basis so each group can update the other on current plans and activities.

Their first specific cooperation will be Sun City's 30th anniversary celebration in January. June Scott Darby, Ambassadors public relations committee chairman, and Martha Moyer, Webb manager of public affairs, will co-chair the effort. "It is very much a cooperative venture between us," said Darby.

"The Ambassadors are not in a position to fund a 30th anniversary because it can be quite expensive," added Plonski. "We're looking to the Ambassadors to provide the manpower and we're providing the necessary financial resources and historical perspective."

Menk said the Ambassadors are forming their own marketing committee to take over Webb's former role.

"What they're saying is they're helping the Sun Cities' image in the Valley. But when they do their national marketing, Sun City West is their focus," said Ambassadors Vice President Jerry Svendsen.

Sun City Ambassadors

More than goodwill, they promote community pride and spirit

by Tom Nash

SOON AFTER the Sun City Ambassadors opened the Sun City Visitors Center, both residents and non-residents began frequenting the facility. Ambassador board member Denny Ryerson spearheaded the concept in early 1989 and in November the center opened its doors to the public.

Two particularly American traits contributed enormously to the success of Sun City:

Mobility — the willingness to move from place to place in response to a more attractive com-

bination of amenities, services and taxes.

Volunteerism — the willingness to get involved in local civic associations for the betterment of the community.

One gave the community its life, the other its soul. Together they define the spirit of the place.

It is a major irony that one of these crucial traits — mobility — now seems to be working in reverse in Sun City. After two or more decades of active retirement, many longtime residents are opting for congregate and life-care complexes that have been built in or near Sun City. Older retirees have been moving out faster than younger retirees are moving in.

Recognizing this trend, a cadre of influential residents and business leaders incorporated as the Sun City Ambassadors in the fall of 1986. This group, led by its first president, Dick King, hit the "rubber chicken and ground peas" circuit (luncheon meetings of local



GEORGE CANTINI PHOTO

Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis clubs). Their message was that Sun City still requires the support and nurturing it once was getting from the Del Webb Corporation. It still needs to be creatively and comprehensively promoted.

Local residents were accustomed to basking in the warm glow of Sun City's worldwide reputation as the premier retirement community. The facts were becoming clear now. While the retirement-living market had become more competitive, no one was beating the drum for Sun City anymore. And if it were to happen, Sun City businesses would have to do it.

With patience and determination, the Ambassadors began gaining the attention of the local populace. In early 1989, the organization's board of directors expanded to 21 members. It strengthened itself by adding representation of three members

each from the boards of the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. and the Sun City Home Owners Association.

AMBASSADORS, cont. page 52



KEEPING WITH the easygoing pace of Sun City, the Visitors Center offers its guests the chance to sit and chat in a cozy "livingroom" area.

Three new board members brought their considerable gifts and business acumen to bear.

Sid Menk, a retired Presbyterian minister, took over as president and public spokesman.

Ken Meade, a local realtor, graphically illustrated the potential losses homeowners would face if they didn't join the cause.

Denny Ryerson, a developer and operator of upscale retirement-living complexes with business interests throughout the Valley, rallied the Ambassadors board around his concept of a Sun City Visitors Center. After four months of complex, multilateral lease negotiations, he obtained a highly visible property at Promenade Mall at the corner of Bell Road and 99th Avenue.

Meade recruited an army of volunteer tradesmen to carry out Ryerson's interior design, and last November the Sun City Visitors Center opened. It is a destination point for tours and individual visitors.

Volunteer residents serve as hosts, hostesses, and tour guides, providing orientation and showing videocassettes with historical and present-day perspectives. Visitors also are furnished with passes to the recreational facilities, information on the local hospitality industry, and glossy, upbeat brochures detailing the many and varied joys of Sun City life.

After the center opened in November 1989, Bob Turner, another board member with an extensive background in sales, took on full-time solicitation of local businesses. The response has been gratifying and demonstrates the commitment of business owners to the community.

Sun Life

The Ambassadors also have challenged Sun Citians with "an opportunity in work clothes," and in characteristic Sun City fashion, hundreds of residents have committed themselves to this new avenue of volunteerism.

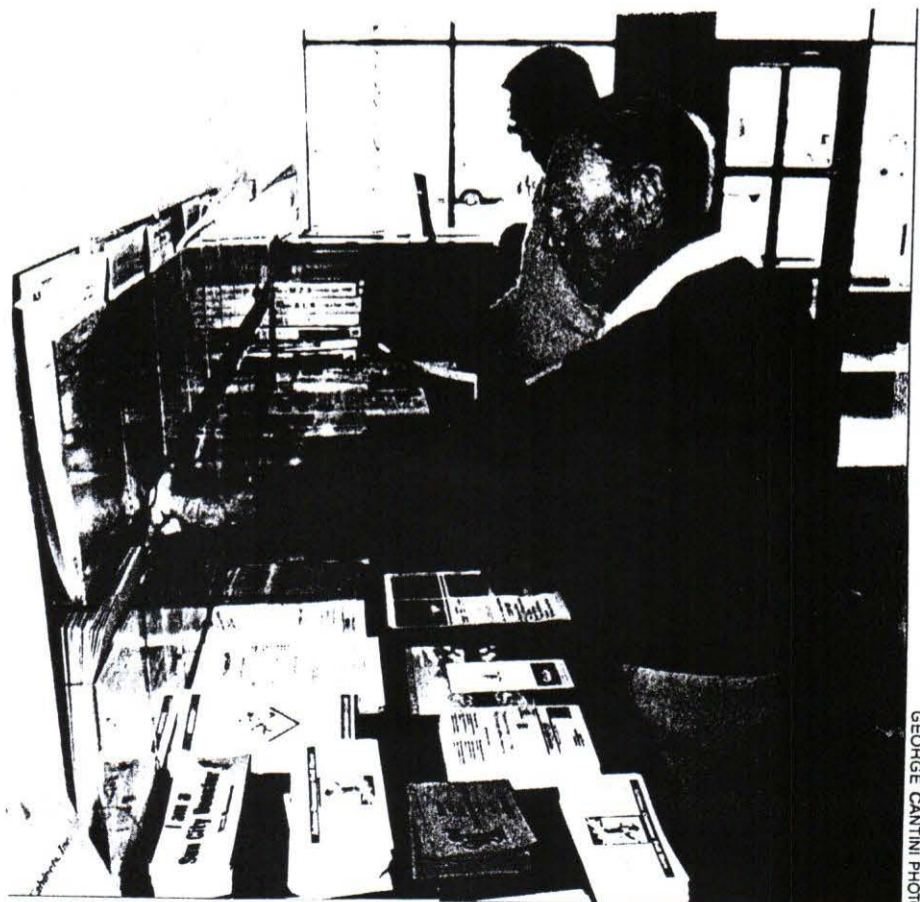
Sid Menk has recruited a strong marketing committee headed by longtime TWA executive Frank Smith. Smith selected resident Jim Bailey to head public relations. Advertising leadership went to Pat Cavitt, administrator of El Dorado of Sun City. That marketing team of a dozen qualified people earlier this year presented to the board a detailed business plan, funding program and marketing campaign.

As they look to the future, the Ambassadors' top priority is to fund an ad campaign in national publications that will cater to new and prospective retirees. This effort will require a broad base of support.

Denny Ryerson continues to urge development of a small "street of dreams." This series of resale "model" homes would demonstrate that some creative design plus a few thousand dollars can work magic in contemporizing Sun City single-family and condominium units built more than 20 years ago.

And while longtime Sun Citians enter new retirement phases, the Ambassadors are seeking to attract "active" new residents who will enthusiastically take to Sun City's two lakes, seven recreation centers, 11 golf courses and more than 350 recreational, cultural and volunteer opportunities. ☉

March/April 1990



GEORGE CANTINI PHOTO

EVERYTHING you want to know about Sun City can be found at the Visitors Center, as these folks discovered.

Nash views Ambassadors' role as critical

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

The Sun City Ambassadors are at something of a critical point, because of what was accomplished last year, with the Visitors' Center taking the lead, says Tom Nash, new president of the organization.

Now, the organization intends to set the active agenda.

While the Ambassadors fine-tune their program, they complement the activities of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The Ambassadors, though, are more focused on specific concerns, says Mr. Nash.

"One of the things the Ambassadors have to do is solicit the support of the community and make certain that the community shares our concerns."

Last year, not 10 percent of Sun City residents were aware that the Ambassadors existed. Now, the new board president estimates the number at 75 percent.

The Visitors' Center, with a successful opening, has enjoyed high visibility in its new location in Promenade Shopping Center, at 99th and Bell Road.

Still, it's supported almost exclusively by business.

The Ambassadors board of directors is about half and half business and community members, says the new president.

As he assumes the leadership role, he sees the representatives from the business community as more pro-active, while the rest of the board is more comfortable with the status quo.

"To what extent does the community share our concerns?" he asks. "Have we identified a real problem that can bring the community together?"

The No. 1 problem, as he sees it, will be for Sun City to maintain the quality of life it has established.

The reality is that Sun City does not have government, does not have a technique for the transfer of resources developed

See NASH, page 2

from community causes.

"We have to have people willing to support those kinds of things, because they recognize the value of these kinds of enterprises," says Mr. Nash.

"They add to quality of life. It's not exactly a quid pro quo, but it's valuable to the community."

It's the same kind of thing with these kinds of services. We have to continue them. "They bring to us values that were formed a long time ago.

"It's not enough just to find buyers of houses," says Mr. Nash.

"The Ambassadors are concerned about finding people ... with a verve for life, people who are used to living well; people with high expectations; people who see their retirement fashioned with a special charm or directed to special advantage —

not as an appendage."

These are people, he says, who have had a lot of experience — and success — in the gut issues of life: care and nourishment of family, business, career, care for aged parents.

"We have to rely on contacts of our residents, as well," he says, noting the Ambassadors have an attractive brochure and other material.

"Rotarians, Kiwanians, Lions, they can each one serve as individual ambassadors, in their own way.

"All these ambassadors will go to the community with our history, and ask the people to support us with funding that will enable us to get out and reach out, to advertise in other areas. We can enable and encourage, train them as to what they can do."

The Ambassadors will be talking to people who recognize

(OVER)

the values of service. People who work in the community may see the values in the community more readily than others who live here," he says.

"The Valley itself is such a source of people moving to Sun City; it hurts us when Sun City is perennially reported in a negative way."

"The best thing that Sun City could do, if the property tax refund is returned, would be to devote it to a scholarship fund for Peoria and/or Dysart High School students. That would establish once and for all that people in Sun City have set aside an issue."

During the 3 1/2 years that Mr. Nash has worked in this community (as vice president, trust and estate administration division, Northern Trust Bank, and as vice president of the Sun Cities Area Community Council),

his attention was devoted extensively to the Community Council.

"I felt we had to provide services to meet needs of an aging population," he says.

I still believe it is necessary, for the Sun Cities.

"But Sun City can't lose sight of its mission: active retirement."

Across the line in Peoria, there are facilities that make it a business supplying assisted living for people who can no longer maintain themselves in their homes.

These facilities have a place in the full picture, he says.

"The public sector, in the short term, provides services for people who need them; right now. In the long term, there may be a problem in locating the services they need.

"But in Peoria, and in the Sun Cities, you'll find catered services; if you don't have the abil-

(OVER)

ity or resiliency to maintain active retirement. It's perfectly suitable, it's an enhancement.

"We have a social network where a person can live here successfully, in any stage of life.

"But active retirement will always be the essence of Sun City."

In the short term, he concedes, there may be more people moving "across the line," than there are coming in.

That's where the work of the Ambassadors begins.

"We are another avenue of volunteer involvement; we have a special mission, all our own."

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Now, the board president says, they won't have to punch a time-clock; they can commit to service programs.

Now the husband is free to do some of the things, perhaps, that the wife has been accomplishing, through Junior League, philanthropic organizations and service clubs.

As he has observed, successful retirement isn't an ending.

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"They become people who catch the opportunity to express the past that is in them.

"They just can't stop doing it," Mr. Nash says.

"...That's Sun City."



Laurie Hurd-Moore/Independent

OPEN FOR BUSINESS. The Sun City Ambassadors' Visitor's Center recently opened in the Promenade Center, 10001 W. Bell Rd, Suite 157. The Visitor's Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday.

VISITORS center is Sun City draw

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — It's 9:30 on a busy Saturday morning at the new Sun City Visitors Center in the Promenade Shopping Center.

People are going in and out the front door, the telephone is ringing and the five volunteers at the center — Bob Turner, Mel and Margaret Turner, Alvin Rau and Dick Veazey — are busy answering questions about Sun City and its active adult retirement lifestyle.

So far an estimated 1,400 visitors have come through that front door just in January alone, said Bob Turner, a Sun City Ambassador and Visitors Center volunteer. That's up from the estimated 500 visitors in November when the center

opened and another 700 to 800 in December.

While many Sun City residents have visited the center to get information on local events or to pick up brochures to send to friends back home, the out-of-town traffic has been brisk, Bob Turner said.

A check of the visitors' register shows people coming from as far away as London, England; Victoria, British Columbia; St. Louis, Carver, Mass.; Manchester and Marshalltown, Iowa; Bonner Springs, Kan., Atlanta; Westlake, Ohio; Cumberland, Md.; Lakewood, Colo., and Cottonwood.

In the register, they have commented on how beautiful they thought Sun City was and one said Sun City is one of the greatest cities in the world.

That's music to the ears of Turner, who said he has enjoyed seeing Sun City through the eyes of others over the past 2½ months.

He tries to answer all their questions and there are many.

"We get a lot of people who come in and want to know about maps — 'Do we have a map of the area?' They ask about taxes, general property prices and 'Do we have rentals for two or three months?'"

"Most of the people from out of town who come in have no real idea what's here," Turner said. "They just see the Visitors Center sign and come in."

Turner said that when he has the time, he personally escorts visitors on a tour of the community, showing them the houses, golf courses, recreation

centers and Viewpoint Lake and introduces them to residents when he can.

"It's amazing the comments we get from them," Turner said. "One guy from New Mexico said he didn't know there was any place in the world like this. We showed him up one street and down the other and talked about the Prides and the posse, the low taxes we have, the lack of crime, how clean the place is."

One Saturday morning visitor was overhead to comment, "I can't believe what I see here."

For those wanting to spend a little time at the Visitors Center, a 15-minute videotape of a program originally produced on KPHO-TV Channel 5 video tape is shown giving the Sun City story in a nutshell. "People are See Visitors, A5

Visitors discover Sun City's charm

—From A1
really impressed with it," Turner said.

Watching the tape Saturday morning were John and Kathy Anderwert of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. They are touring the Valley for a week and said they wanted to make sure they saw Sun City.

"I saw something on TV once about Sun City and we decided to come down and see for ourselves," said John Anderwert. "It's beautiful here. Do they rent out condos in the winter?"

Anderwert said he has only seen something similar to Sun

City in Palm Springs, Calif., but that was priced higher.

Sun City resident Don Bittenbender, a former president of the Sun Cities Classic Car Club, dropped by to talk and inquire about the possibilities of volunteering his time.

"I think Sun City is the best-kept secret of all the retirement communities," Bittenbender said. "The only way we're going to lick it is to some way get a compulsory deal — at least a start of \$25 a person, or whatever, to help promote the community. The Ambassadors need an advertising budget."

New director works for love of Sun City

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Sun City retiree Jim Bailey knows the value of good public relations and promotion after a 35-year career in business, public relations, advertising and journalism.

But the Sun City Ambassadors' first salaried employee and new executive director realizes he can only go as far as his bare-bones budget and community cooperation takes him if the Ambassadors are to continue fulfilling their role in promoting Sun City to the outside world.

The Ambassadors' 20-man board of directors hired Bailey to coordinate their large volunteer staff, to help their fund-raising drives, to be their media spokesman and to act as a liaison between Sun City's



Daily News-Sun

JIM BAILEY — Bailey is the new executive director of the Sun City Ambassadors.

business and residential community.

His appointment was announced Thursday at the Sun City Visitor's Center.

"In his new position, Jim will provide on-site supervision of the activities at the Visitors Center and with me he will develop and be responsible for implementing our business plan," said Ambassadors President Tom Nash.

"I think this last year of the Ambassadors was an excellent example of the untidiness of our business enterprises in their initial stages," he said. "The Ambassadors have struggled since our inception to provide an organizational framework that will enable our residents to be effective Ambassadors in representing Sun City to the communities they came from.

"We've struggled to maintain our volunteers so they can per-

form their tasks efficiently in the Visitors Center and elsewhere," said Nash. "We feel we have an obligation to economize their time. So we're taking a big step forward by putting behind us our untidy beginnings and appointing Bailey."

Bailey said it will be his job to try to maintain full cooperation within his volunteer staff and the community, and provide the necessary leadership for the Ambassadors to achieve their goals and objectives.

"It's a matter of bringing people together to help them work together and keep them working together for the good of the organization," said Bailey. "Complete interaction is necessary and, at the same time, openness is necessary with people and the media."

Bailey said he believes Sun

City is still the greatest place to live and his strong desire to promote that belief to others is the main reason he took the job.

"The board has offered me a salary but it's so low it's pitiful," said Bailey, an Ambassadors volunteer before he took the job. "The point is I don't care. I'm retired and I'm here to work for the benefit of the organization and the good of the community."

Bailey said his salary will come out of previous contributions by the Sun City business community until other source funds become available.

Until the Ambassadors develop a comprehensive and viable residents' fund drive, Bailey said they will continue to need the support of the business and professional community.

Nash said the Ambassadors,

with Sun City residents comprising 12 of its board members, are confident the residential community is now fully aware of the great need to promote Sun City beyond its borders and will financially support them.

Bailey said the groundwork has already been laid for his new responsibilities by former Ambassadors President Sid Menk and the quality people who have been coming into the Sun City Visitors Center.

Visitor Center records show that 2,013 people visited the center during February. Many took Ambassadors promotion brochures with them to distribute back home.

Bailey said the two key words to build on are community and unity.

Sun City Ambassadors seeking professionalism

By Connie Cone Sexton
Staff writer

SUN CITY — The hiring of an executive director should give a "more polished business approach" to the Sun City Ambassadors in its efforts to successfully promote the community, the group's president said.

Tom Nash, who recently was elected president of the Ambassadors, said it is time to straighten the "untidy beginnings" that had formed since the group began about three years ago as an all-volunteer effort.

Hiring a director will bring more organization to the group's goal of bringing new residents to the retirement community, Nash said.

On Thursday, he held a press conference to introduce Sun City resident Jim Bailey as the new director.

Nash said Bailey's leadership and background in public relations and advertising will help the group, which "had been struggling since its inception to provide a framework of ideas to represent the community."

"Today, we're putting behind us our untidy beginnings," Nash said.

His pronouncement came as a surprise to Sidney Menk, who until a few weeks ago had been president of the Ambassadors.

While Menk was in office, however, he argued against the merits of hiring an executive director, Nash said. That and other disagreements led to the Ambassador board deciding to elect a new president, he explained.

Menk, who helped form the group, was hurt by his dismissal. "They just let me go without

notice. I thought the Ambassadors could function through volunteer strength but they didn't agree with me."

Nash said his election as president was not meant to be a slap to Menk. "The board made the decision that officers should not put down roots," he said.

"Sid was opposed to compensation of a staff member," he said. But having a paid director will help lend a more professional appearance to the group, Nash said.

To lure retirees, the group will

have to advertise nationally as Del Webb did, Nash said, creating the need for a more professional approach, something Bailey can help achieve.

Bailey, a Sun City resident for three years, sees the job as a challenge.

"Some individuals would have us think that Sun City has slipped into (the) doldrums. That homes have run down. That we are a walled-in, self-centered, egotistical community," he said.

"These thoughts are far from the truth, as Sun City is not a

static community, but a progressive, vibrant community ... It's inhabited by active adults who not only care about their own community but reach out and become involved in a myriad of programs in surrounding communities."

Ambassadors will focus on local and national retirees.

Letters will be mailed to personnel directors of companies across the country, suggesting that soon-to-retiree employees consider Sun City.

Members of the Ambassadors
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PROMOTE

From Page 1

frequently court visitors to the Valley. In February, about 2,000 people visited the Ambassadors center in the Promenade shopping center, on the southwest corner of 99th Avenue and Bell Road in Sun City.

Nash, a former banker, is excited about bringing new residents to the community. Since becoming involved in Sun City activities, he said his views have changed.

For several years, he worked with the Sun City Community Council, trying to improve services and "accommodate the needs of the older retiree."

But last year, Nash said his direction changed to focus on the problems of keeping the community itself healthy.

It is time to attract younger retirees to Sun City, "People who will be willing to support the various organizations we have here," he said. "We need people

need people to be willing to tax themselves to support the programs we have here, like the Sun City Symphony."

The days of being able to draw the "CEOs, the top-level executive" to the community may be over, he fears. Since Sun City's inception, the community phone book has been "a directory of Who's Who." Bank presidents, politicians and corporate leaders often made Sun City their home. Competition from other developments has changed that, Nash said.

"It's not sufficient anymore to just find buyers for the houses in Sun City. You need people who are willing to support the amenities" in the community, the president said. "I don't want Sun City to be down-scaled."

"Sun City has to maintain its focus on active retirees. I don't want people to perceive us as an

Nash views Ambassadors' role as critical

THE SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT, Feb. 28-March 6, 1990

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

The Sun City Ambassadors are at something of a critical point, because of what was accomplished last year, with the Visitors' Center taking the lead, says Tom Nash, new president of the organization.

Now, the organization intends to set the active agenda.

While the Ambassadors fine-tune their program, they compliment the activities of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The Ambassadors, though, are more focused on specific concerns, says Mr. Nash.

"One of the things the Ambassadors have to do is solicit the support of the community and make certain that the community shares our concerns."

Last year, not 10 percent of Sun City residents were aware that the Ambassadors existed. Now, the new board president estimates the number at 75 percent.

The Visitors' Center, with a successful opening, has enjoyed high visibility in its new location in Promenade Shopping Center, at 99th and Bell Road.

Still, it's supported almost exclusively by business.

The Ambassadors board of directors is about half and half business and community members, says the new president.

As he assumes the leadership role, he sees the representatives from the business community as more pro-active, while the rest of the board is more comfortable with the status quo.

"To what extent does the community share our concerns?" he asks. "Have we identified a real problem that can bring the community together?"

The No. 1 problem, as he sees it, will be for Sun City to maintain the quality of life it has established.

The reality is that Sun City does not have government, does not have a technique for the transfer of resources developed

from community causes.

"We have to have people willing to support those kinds of things, because they recognize the value of these kinds of enterprises," says Mr. Nash.

"They add to quality of life. It's not exactly a quid pro quo, but it's valuable to the community."

It's the same kind of thing with these kinds of services. We have to continue them. "They bring to us values that were formed a long time ago.

"It's not enough just to find buyers of houses," says Mr. Nash.

"The Ambassadors are concerned about finding people ... with a verve for life, people who are used to living well; people with high expectations; people who see their retirement fashioned with a special charm or directed to special advantage — not as an appendage."

These are people, he says, who have had a lot of experience — and success — in the gut issues of life: care and nourishment of family, business, career, care for aged parents.

"We have to rely on contacts of our residents, as well," he says, noting the Ambassadors have an attractive brochure and other material.

"Rotarians, Kiwanians, Lions, they can each one serve as individual ambassadors, in their own way.

"All these ambassadors will go to the community with our history, and ask the people to support us with funding that will enable us to get out and reach out, to advertise in other areas. We can enable and encourage, train them as to what they can do."

The Ambassadors will be talking to people who recognize

the values of service. People who work in the community may see the values in the community more readily than others who live here," he says.

"The Valley itself is such a source of people moving to Sun City; it hurts us when Sun City is perennially reported in a negative way."

"The best thing that Sun City could do, if the property tax refund is returned, would be to devote it to a scholarship fund for Peoria and/or Dysart High School students. That would establish once and for all that people in Sun City have set aside an issue."

During the 3 1/2 years that Mr. Nash has worked in this community (as vice president, trust and estate administration division, Northern Trust Bank, and as vice president of the Sun Cities Area Community Council), his attention was devoted extensively to the Community Council.

"I felt we had to provide services to meet needs of an aging population," he says.

I still believe it is necessary, for the Sun Cities.

"But Sun City can't lose sight of its mission: active retirement."

Across the line in Peoria, there are facilities that make it a business supplying assisted living for people who can no longer maintain themselves in their homes.

These facilities have a place in the full picture, he says.

"The public sector, in the short term, provides services for people who need them; right now. In the long term, there may be a problem in locating the services they need.

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That's where the work of the Ambassadors begins.

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The beauty of Sun City, Mr. Nash says, is that people can become directly involved (rather than leaving those tasks for the elected representatives). They can provide the services directly.

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In order to find these people, Mr. Nash says the Ambassadors are trying to target companies who are down-sizing in terms of employment.

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Now, the board president says, they won't have to punch a time-clock; they can commit to service programs.

Now the husband is free to do some of the things, perhaps, that the wife has been accomplishing, through Junior League, philanthropic organizations and service clubs.

As he has observed, successful retirement isn't an ending.

Initially, new retirees may travel, lounge by the pool. But, after a few years, they find that they really have a need to get involved.

"They become people who catch the opportunity to express the past that is in them.

"They just can't stop doing it," Mr. Nash says.

"...That's Sun City."

Ambassador promotional campaign is now people-oriented

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

Promoting Sun City is a top priority for James D. Bailey, newly named executive director of the Sun City Ambassadors.

He's bringing the promotional campaign to the public as he believes it's to the local home owners' advantage to support the Ambassadors.

The organization, he says, is working in their behalf.

"Public recognition of the Ambassadors increased enormously this past year, with Sun Citizens becoming aware of our mission," Mr. Bailey says.

"Witness the opening of the new Visitors Center and the 30th Anniversary week-long celebration."

For the success of these events he credits the administration of immediate past-president Sid

Menk.

"The Visitors Center already has attracted thousands of people in search of information about Sun City.

"But the organization does not have the funds to carry out a large-scale marketing campaign, nor a continuous promotional, advertising program."

Under the new executive director's leadership, the Ambassadors hope to find a way to fund these types of activities, and to continue the operation of the Visitors Center.

These funds will come from various sources:

- From philanthropic individuals who will provide additional seed money beyond the funds provided by Sun City business and professional firms, or

- From grants,
- From residents,
- From vendor providers or

- From memberships.

The Ambassadors expect to conduct a direct mail campaign yet this spring.

"We also must work cooperatively with real estate, business and professional firms, as well as shopping center management and other agencies to assist them in achieving their goals for the good of the Sun City image," Mr. Bailey says.

"At the same time, the internal operation of the Ambassadors must be stabilized with new committees and additional volunteers."

The Ambassadors organization must also:

- Expand its outreach program,
- Promote its speakers bureau
- Establish its marketing outlook,
- Utilize goodwill ambassadors for the business and pro-

fessional community,

- Establish a workable budget
- Search out and secure funding resources to enable the organization to carry out its goals and objectives.

A Sun City resident for the past three years, Mr. Bailey has found it to be a progressive, vibrant community, inhabited by active adults who not only care about their own community, but who reach out and become involved in programs in surrounding areas.

He believes his background, which includes some 35 years in management positions, journalism, radio broadcasting, education and public relations, will aid in the Ambassadors' effort to tell the Sun City story to the community, the rest of the state

and to the nation.

"Here, we have a community where the lifestyle you want is of your own choosing.

"You can be active, or simply lay back. The choice is almost beyond the imagination."

He finds unacceptable the opinion of some, that Sun City has slipped into doldrums, that it's a walled-in, self-centered, egotistical community.

"These thoughts are far from the truth ... as Sun City is not a static, but a progressive, vibrant community, inhabited by active adults who not only care about their own community, but reach out and become involved in a myriad of programs in surrounding communities."

The new administrator has a diverse background, including service in the United States Navy Reserves.

He holds a bachelor's degree in industrial education from the University of Wisconsin-Stout and a master's degree in speech and communications from the University of Denver.

Mr. Bailey has taught school, worked in public relations and advertising and served as manager of the Northfield, Minn. Chamber of Commerce

He has been an active member of the Lions Clubs International since 1952.

Visitors Center draws 12,000

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — When Dolores Schultz moved to Sun City five years ago, the community did not have a destination point for visitors and prospective residents.

Now, the community's year-old focal point for visitor information is booming.

The Sun City Visitors Center, in the Promenade Shopping Center on 99th Avenue and Bell Road, has had more than 12,000 people walk through its doors from January to September of this year.

On Saturday, Schultz walked through the center with her brother from California, showing him all the retirement community has to offer.

"I think it's very important that we have a Visitors Center," she said. "When people are interested, they have to start somewhere and this place lets you know about all the facilities and amenities we have in Sun City."

Since the Visitors Center opened last November, thousands of out-of-towners and local residents alike have used its resources.

The center is operated by 200 Sun City volunteers who work as greeters and tour guides.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

"This is a definite asset to the community. I think it's wonderful," said Selma Henry, who has volunteered at the center since March. "But you'd be surprised at how many people who live here in Sun City have never been here and don't know what

the Visitors Center is all about."

The Visitors Center is the brainchild of the Sun City Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors have grown from a group that met monthly in 1986 to an organization with an executive director, working committees and volunteers who staff the Visitors Center seven days a week.

Tom Nash, president of the Ambassadors, said the group's job is to promote Sun City so others will retire in the community.

"This past year has been a banner rookie season for the Ambassadors," Nash said.

Tours of Sun City have been given to hundreds of visitors from throughout the United States, Japan, the Philippines and Europe, he said.

"It's amazing to think that in the past, there was no way a person coming from outside of the community could get oriented with Sun City," Nash said. "Now, prospective residents come to the Visitors Center to find out about the community. Some have used the center as the focal point for sociological studies of a healthy retirement lifestyle."

Nash said he thinks some people misinterpret the mission of the Ambassadors as one that benefits the real estate industry.

"It's up to Realtors to sell homes, but if real estate values are down and a number of homes are up for sale, then there is a need to promote Sun City," Nash said.

The Visitors Center is entirely run by volunteers, with

OVER



Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

SIGN IN, PLEASE — Eileen Weller signs the guest register while her husband, Carl, talks with Melvin Turner, a Sun City Visitors Center volunteer. The Wellers, who live in Sun City, were in the center Saturday picking up information for friends in their home state, Ohio.

the exception of the paid, part-time positions of an executive director and secretary.

"Everything is done by volunteers — that's what makes Sun City so unique and interesting," Nash said.

Volunteers for the Visitors Center said they are able to share their personal stories with

the visitors and tell them why they love Sun City.

"We encourage people to tell their friends about Sun City," said Melvin Turner, who moved to Sun City 14 years ago. "I'm excited about the Visitor's Center — it's something that's been badly needed. We want to make Sun City proud of this."

10/16/90 Ambassadors ask Sun City for assistance

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors are launching a fund-raising campaign to support an array of programs, projects and activities to promote the retirement community.

Tom Nash, president of the Ambassadors, said \$240,000 is needed in 1991 to finance a list of activities designed to attract prospective Sun City residents.

"With the pending departure of Del Webb from Sun City West, we have to have programs in place that put our story in front of prospective retirees," Nash said. Del Webb Communities Inc. developed Sun City and is expected to complete Sun City West in 1993.

Nash said the Ambassadors will kick off the communitywide fund-raiser Oct. 22 by mailing letters to all Sun City residents asking for their support.

He said the campaign marks the first time the Ambassadors have formally solicited funds

from Sun City residents.

"We want to have a strong outreach program so there will be a much stronger demand for homes in Sun City," Nash said. "But the immediate goal is to bring people to Sun City who want to do what it takes to make this their community. We want the kind of person that makes this their new home."

Nash said the Ambassadors hope to start a number of new programs to attract new retirees to Sun City.

Some of the programs planned:

- **Visitors Center** — Continuing the daily operations of the Visitors Center, on the southwest corner of 99th Avenue and Bell Road. Rent, utilities and other operating expenses are estimated at \$45,000 annually.

- **Sun City sampler** — A short-term vacation package designed for interested retirees to visit Sun City to sample the lifestyle. Information on reduced

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—From A1

lodging costs and recreation center activities would be mailed to the prospective residents.

"Living in Sun City is something you have to experience," Nash said.

- **Senior-living expositions** — Promoting Sun City at retirement-living seminars in key areas such as California, Arizona and the Midwest. During the past five years, the majority of new residents in Sun City have come from these areas.

- **Advertising** — Campaign for local, regional and national advertising in newspapers and magazines catering to seniors. Television, radio and billboard advertising also are being considered.

- **Special events** — A number of programs planned from October to April would include a

Visitors Center open house, volunteer-recognition events, Strawberry Festival, a summer event for those who don't leave the community during the hot temperatures, a Welcome Back Festival and celebrity events in the Sun Bowl.

"All of these programs are dependent on community support," Nash said. "The business community has made very substantial contributions and really took the concept of the Visitors Center to heart."

Nash said about 45 businesses donate \$50 to \$100 a month to keep the Visitors Center going.

He said the Ambassadors anticipate using business donations to support the operations of the Visitors Center and to use residents' donations for projects promoting Sun City.

The non-profit Ambassadors group was formed in late 1986

and has since supported the Visitors Center, which opened last November.

Jim Bailey, executive director of the Ambassadors, said the group is making the full-scale, one-time appeal for funds in hopes that they will not have to seek contributions again for several years.

If the Ambassadors get an average donation of \$100 from each of the more than 25,000 households in Sun City, Bailey said the proposed programs could be adequately funded for several years.

"Our Visitors Center has been highly successful in representing and selling our Sun City lifestyle," Bailey said. "But we need to go beyond our outer limits where our present residents have come from and tell our story."

Just passing through Sun City

German visitors research life of U.S. retirees

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

A delegation of German parliamentarians visited Sun City Friday during a fact-finding tour of the United States to study the lifestyles of retirees.

The group watched a video about Sun City at the Visitors Center and then were given a tour of the community by Douglas P. Wright, tour guide coordinator for the Ambassadors.

The parliamentarians are members of the Select Committee on Family and Aging, a

committee newly formed in Germany.

Members of the committee marveled at members of the Sun City Poins doing the splits and an 82-year-old man who ran 10 kilometers in 43 minutes.

They couldn't help but giggle when they saw people driving golf cars on the major thoroughfares.

Rainer Eppelmann, chairman of the committee, said through an interpreter that he was impressed with Sun City.

"We are interested in the problems among senior citizens and knew that Sun City was one of the places we had to visit," Eppelmann said. The group has been to New York, Washington and were going to Sedona Friday afternoon.

"I have an excellent impression but I wonder how they manage with no young people around and how the average citizen could afford living here," Eppelmann said.

Eppelmann said he was particularly concerned to find out that not all seniors are automatically provided with some type of health care as they are in Germany.

"To me, that's what seems to be important," he said.

The other committee members on the tour were Lisa Seuster, Erika Reinhardt, Winifried Fockenber, Arne Fuhrmann, Arno Schmidt, Dr. Barbara Hoell, Juergen Masengeil and interpreter Roya Azadi.

Wright said members of the committee said they had never

seen a community that equals Sun City.

"Some of them were ready to buy a house here. We have so many numbers of people from all over the world who visit us and they always seem to be so impressed. That's what we are trying to push in the states," Wright said.

The Sun City Ambassadors have an active campaign to attract new residents to Sun City.

Last year the group offered to give Sun City residents photo-ready advertisements to take to their hometown newspapers if they desired.

In one case, the ads have had a tremendous impact in promoting Sun City, said Frank Smith,

See Ads, A5

Ads make impression

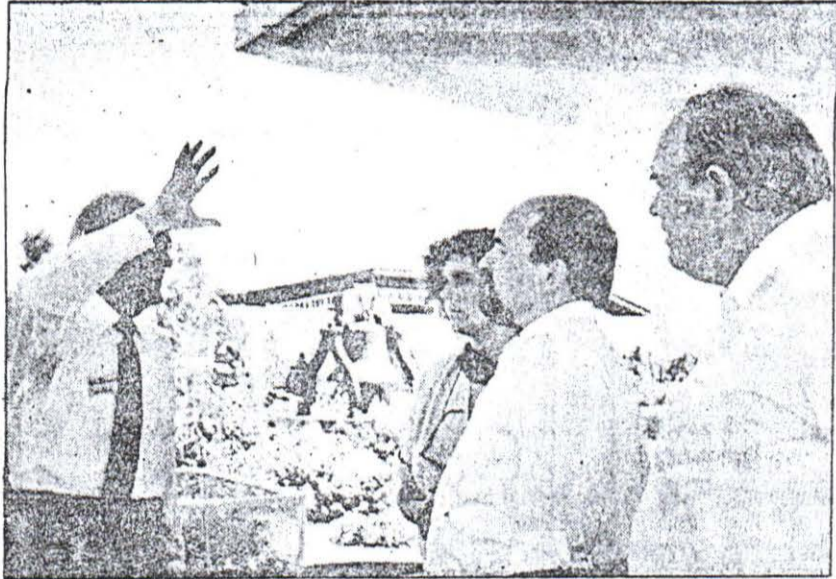
-From A1

marketing chairman for the Ambassadors.

Smith said a Sun City resident, who asked that her name not be used, picked up some of the ads and ran them 15 times in a Decatur, Ill., newspaper.

So far the Ambassadors have received nearly 40 letters in response to the ads, each asking for more information about Sun City, Smith said.

"It was a darn nice thing she did for us. It cost her some money, but it just proves that it works," Smith said. "Any time anyone mentions Sun City to their friends back home it helps the community. We need new residents all the time to continue being a success."



Daily News-Sun

VISITING — Douglas P. Wright, left, tour guide coordinator for the Sun City Ambassadors, showed the Bell Center to members of the German Parliament Friday. The parliamentarians are members of the Committee for Family and Seniors in Germany.

German parliament studies retirement lifestyles in U.S.

A delegation of members of the German Bundestag will spend about two hours in Sun City later this month.

With the German general consul from Los Angeles and an interpreter, the delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany will arrive at the Sun City Visitors Center on Bell Road.

The touring members of the German Bundestag Committee for Family and Seniors will leave the Northwest Valley for Sedona, where the mayor is planning a welcome and dinner.

The Sun City lifestyle is an international attraction that's not always fully understood, says Douglas Wright, tour director and member of the board of directors of Sun City Ambassadors.

Mr. Wright recalled spending three hours recently on tour with a delegation of Ph.D.s from the Philippines. After viewing Sun City, one learned member of the tour still didn't seem to understand what active retirement was all about.

Over lunch, that visiting delegate leaned across the table, touched the tour director's arm and asked, "What did you people do that your children threw you out of their homes?"

Sun City is particularly difficult for residents of the Far East to comprehend, says Mr. Wright.

"In the Orient, there's an intergenerational living ... They don't grasp the concept of retirees leaving their homes and families and going

See TOURS, Page 13

■ TOURS

From Page 1

down to Arizona to live."

For Europeans the active retirement lifestyle is not so challenging.

Coordinator of the tour for the German parliamentarians is Consulate General Renate Friedemann of Los Angeles. She contacted the Sun City Ambassadors in April, wondering if it would be possible for the group of high-level officials to come to Sun City.

Their itinerary also includes a stop in Washington, D.C. to confer with senators and representatives.

The objective, says Mr. Wright, is to see how senior citizens determine a specific lifestyle.

"We've had delegations, legislators, journalists, colleges from all over the world."

-- Douglas Wright, Sun City Ambassadors

The former senior minister of First Presbyterian Church of Sun City is prepared to show Sun City and communicate with the visitors.

The German tour is one of many he's conducted.

"We've had delegations, legislators, journalists, colleges from all over the world."

Guests at the Visitors Center usually view a 20-minute video tape put together by TV Channel 5,

the tour director says. There's a large number of volunteers who serve as guides.

Tours call for stops at recreation centers, golf courses and other facilities, residential areas and shopping malls and often include a glimpse of Viewpoint Lake.

Last year 25,000 visitors, individuals, couples, families and groups registered at the center.

Visitors keep staff busy at center

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Saturdays in July don't attract the heaviest traffic at the Sun City Visitors Center.

But there was enough last weekend to keep three staff volunteers busy at the center, located at Bell Road and 99th Avenue.

Even though the summer is considered the slow season for the center, interest in Sun City knows no specific season and volunteers continue to promote and distribute information about the community.

Saturday a local resident wanted to send some Sun City informational brochures and a map to his sister in Oklahoma City.

Doreen Durocher, a 12-year Sun City resident from Michigan, wanted to see more of Arizona and came by for a brochure on the Williams to Grand Canyon steam train ride. She said she and her husband bought a Sun City home within a week after seeing the community for the first time.

A retired couple from Vancouver, Wash., had just purchased a Phase II Sun City home Friday. They checked out the well-known blinking Sun City Ambassadors community wall map and followed the green lights to see where all seven of Sun City's golf courses are located.

"We moved here because of the golf. It's a golfer's paradise," said Dick Gjelsteen, a retired Air Force officer from Vancouver, who was familiar with the area after once being stationed in Tucson.

"We figured the best time to buy down here was in July and August," he said. "But even I don't want to be here in August."

"So we came down on Tuesday to buy property and wrapped up the deal on Friday," said Gjelsteen. "We bought a home about two blocks south of Bell Road near 102nd Avenue."

The Gjelsteens said they first sampled the lifestyle at the Vacation Special Apartments in Sun City West. They said their final decision to buy came down to Sun City or Sun City West. "We felt we found the best buy here (Sun City)," he said.

"But we still have a lot of commitments back in Washington so we'll snowbird it here for awhile," he said.

"Even at home he plays golf seven days a week," said Bev Gjelsteen, who was informed they'll feel right at home if they want to meet

other Norwegians in the Sun City Norwegian Club.

"I think a lot of people come here in the summer to see if they can tolerate the weather," said visitors center office manager Norma Pitcairn. "Last summer was the only summer in the 16 years I've been out here where I really minded the heat."

Pitcairn said she is trying to encourage more residents to visit the center just to see what is available. Visitors can pick up more than a hundred informational brochures, maybe pick up

a special Sun City license plate for a \$50 contribution or view the 20-minute Sun City video.

Center records show 291 visitors came to the center during the first 12 days in July, compared to 624 for all of July 1990 when the center was open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. About one of every five visitors is a resident.

The center's summer hours this year are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

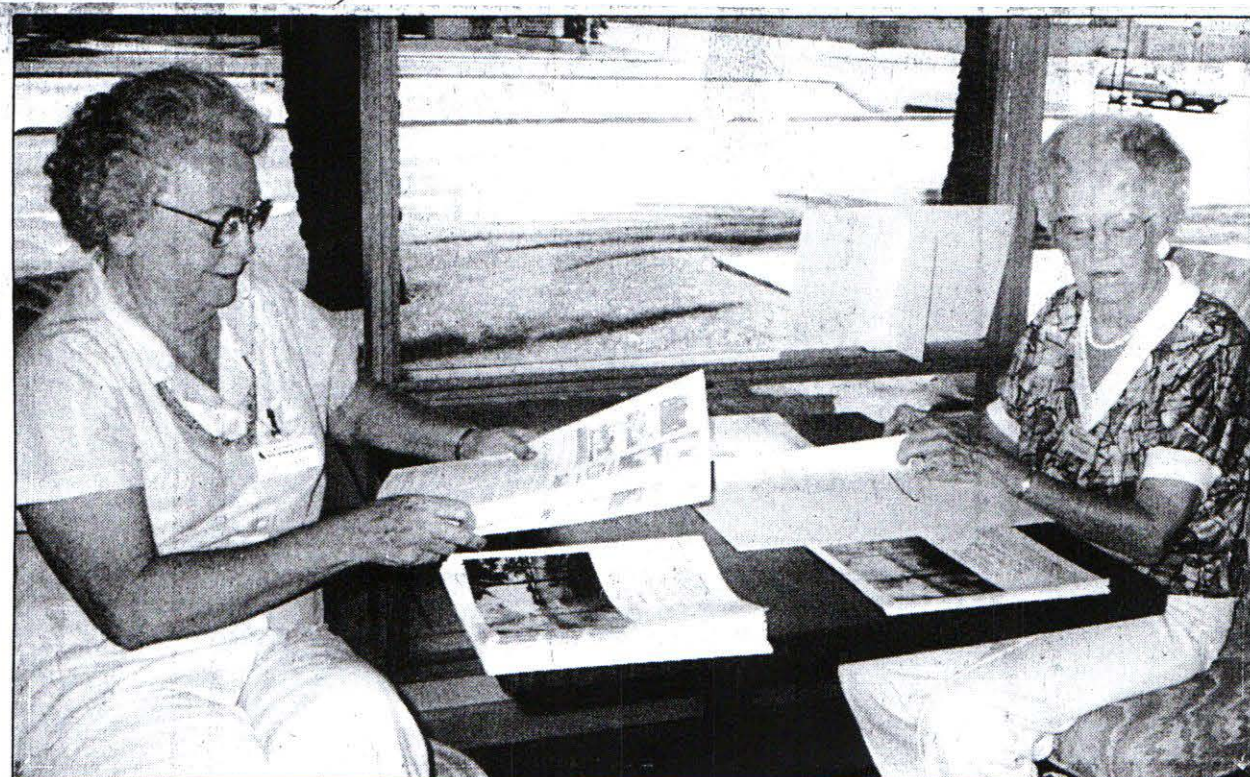
Although many Sun City residents leave for the summer, Pitcairn said she still has about 64 Sun City volunteers available to work morning or afternoon shifts on alternate weeks.

Foreign entourage are still frequent Sun City visitors, Pitcairn said. Groups from Germany and India visited recently and a group from Turkey studying at Glendale's American Graduate School of International Management is next on the agenda.

Pitcairn said she got a call Friday from another Japanese tour group wanting to see Sun City. Japan continues to send the most visitors to Sun City of any foreign country.

OVER

'We moved here because of the
golf. It's a golfer's paradise,'
Dick Gjelsteen
New Sun City homeowner



Daily News-Sun photo by Mike Garrett

VISITORS CENTER VOLUNTEERS — Sun City residents Mary Veazey, left, and Inez Blair, sort Sun City brochures to pass out to the expected 620 visitors this month at the Sun City Visitor's Center in the Promenade Shopping Center, 99th Avenue and Bell Road.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Jean McPherson, head nurse of Boswell's short-term surgical unit on the third floor, explains the hospital's distribution system to Takashi Minomata, left, and Yoshita Koyama of Japan. Ten Japanese businessmen toured the Sun Cities Tuesday to take a look at health care centers that cater to senior citizens.

Japanese seek ideas for future

— From A1

Some of the visitors were particularly interested in the hospitals' supply, processing and distribution systems.

During a tour of Boswell Hospital, the group took numerous photos of supply cupboards and the organization of the nurses stations.

Yoshito Koyama, the interpreter for the group and project manager of Technology Transfer Institute, said they had never seen a hospital quite like Boswell.

"They feel like they are in a hotel and not a hospital," Koyama said as the group waited in the lobby.

Members of the tour group were impressed with the paintings on the walls of the hospital because they were donated and painted by local residents.

"As far as the hospital is concerned there is nothing surprising for us because we have hospitals in Japan. But the surroundings and atmosphere is so luxurious here. From the standpoint of an architect, the design of the hospital is completely different from those in Japan. In Japan, the hospital really looks like a hospital," Nakano said.

Linda Braverman, manager of community relation's for Sun Health Corp., said many foreigners tour the hospital during the summer months.

Japanese study area care centers

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Architects, developers and design engineers from Japan visited the Sun Cities Tuesday to get a look at what they see as their country's future.

The 10 health care industry professionals, including an interpreter, reporter and university professor, are on a five-city tour of the United States to study care centers designed for senior citizens.

"In Japan the older population is growing and it is predicted that at least 25 percent of the people will be 65 and older in 20 years. This is why we are here. We want to visit places in America that specialize in senior citizens. America has a very advanced system for seniors," said Akira Nakano, an assistant professor at Kyoto Women's University.

Nakano, a prominent expert in

hospital architecture, said he hopes the visit will allow him to take development ideas back to Japan.

Technology Transfer Institute, an international organization specializing in technological and scientific information exchange, contacted the Sun City Ambassadors and arranged a tour of the Sun Cities. The Ambassadors have given tours to hundreds of visitors from across the world.

Ambassador Douglas Wright showed a video presentation on Sun City to the group and then took them to see recreation centers, care centers and Walter O. Boswell and Del E. Webb memorial hospitals.

Nakano said he was impressed with the fact that so many people in the Sun Cities volunteer.

"The concept of volunteers in Japan is not so deeply rooted in society as it is here," Nakano

See Japanese, A5

Sun City welcomes TV crews, Japanese

What makes the Sun Cities so popular?

Apparently, that's a question the news media and visitors from foreign countries are trying to answer.

During September, the community will be visited by a national TV news crew, a Japanese TV crew and a group of Japanese health officials.

Douglas Wright, a member of the Sun City Ambassadors, is responsible for coordinating tours for visiting dignitaries.

This year alone, he says, Sun City has been visited by groups from Japan, Germany, France, Spain and the Philippines.

Last week, NBC News visited the community to tape a documentary on retirement communities.

The purpose of the visit and the date the segment is to be aired is not yet known.

While here, however, the television crew discussed the incorporation issue and filmed interviews with Nat Jampel, a leading opponent of incorporation, and Les Merydith, a supporter of self-government.

This week, a group of Japanese health officials will be in town to tour the community's hospitals and health care facilities.

According to Mr. Wright, the tour was arranged by the Technology Transfer Institute in Tokyo and includes 10 officials from Japan's health care industry.

A Japanese television game show will be in town Sept. 16-17 to film a "TV short."

No other information about the visit has been released to the media, although it is known that both the Sun City Posse and the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. will be involved in coordinating the visit.

Sun Cities lifestyle draws international attention

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

Sun City is drawing much international attention as scholars worldwide contemplate whether to start retirement communities in their countries.

The Sun City Ambassadors have hosted visitors from 20 countries including Japan, Germany, the Philippines, France and Spain since November 1989, said Doug Wright, who volunteers as coordinator of tours for the Ambassadors.

The Sun City lifestyle is "mind-boggling" to many foreigners, Wright said.

"A university professor from the Philippines once asked me 'what was it that you did that your children threw you out of your homes and you had to live here,'" Wright said.

"In the Philippines, they are accustomed to intergenerational living. The grandparents move in with their children and grandchildren, and they take care of each other. The idea that grandparents live apart from their families is difficult for them to comprehend."

Although it's a Japanese tradition for

"A university professor from the Philippines once asked me 'what was it that you did that your children threw you out of your homes and you had to live here.'"

Doug Wright
Coordinator of tours
Sun City Ambassadors

aged parents to live with their children, there is an increasing number of Japanese elderly without families to live with.

Japanese scholars have been visiting Sun City to decide whether such a retirement community would work in their country.

Toshikazu Yukawa, a professor at Nara Women's University, said through an interpreter that he was impressed with Sun City's lifestyle.

"For those without children or whose children are older and have their own families, it's good to live in this kind of

See AMBASSADOR, Page 3



Dana Leonard / Staff photographer
Sun City Ambassadors tour guide Bob Harris (right) talks through an interpreter to a group of Japanese visitors at the Bell Recreation Center. The Ambassadors have hosted visitors from 20 countries since November 1989.

Sun City supporters start drive to raise \$220,000

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

AMBASSADOR

From Page 1

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors will launch a fund-raising drive with a celebration at 2 p.m. Oct. 19 at the Sunbowl, 107th Avenue and Claire Drive.

Entertainment and refreshments will be provided.

The Ambassadors is a non-profit organization of about 175 residents and business owners attempting to market Sun City.

"Nobody else is doing for Sun City what the Ambassadors are doing," said Mort Reed, Ambassadors president. "Del Webb did it while building here, but when he finished, no one publicized Sun City."

Flagship of the program is the Sun City Visitors Center, 99th Avenue and Bell Road, which has hosted more than 28,000 visitors since its opening in November 1989. The center provides free literature, tours of the city, a video about Sun City and information about services available in Sun City.

"We work for all Sun Citians, and we need the support of all Sun Citians, residents and businesses alike," Reed said.

The fund-raising goal is \$220,000, which would be used for 1992 activities such as advertising,

society," Yukawa said.

A smaller version of Sun City might be a possibility, Yukawa said.

Yukawa was one of six scholars from Japan who took a Sun City Ambassadors tour Sept. 27.

Their first stop was the Bell Recreation Center, where tour guide Bob Harris showed them what "active retirement" is about.

They watched Sun Citians making jewelry in the lapidary shop and looked at the dolls, ceramics and rugs crafted by residents.

Also included in their tour were

operation of the visitors center and displays at senior expos at selected state fairs nationwide, said Paul Barnes, campaign director for the group.

Another new program would be a "street of dreams," which would demonstrate how the older residences in Phase 1 of Sun City, which were built in 1960, could be remodeled in an attempt to increase their marketability, Barnes said.

Doug Wright, an Ambassadors board member, has been named chairman of the fund-raising campaign.

bowling alleys, tennis courts, swimming pools, libraries and what Sun City is most popular for — golf courses.

Tours include visits to residential areas in Sun City. On occasion, Wright has opened his home to visitors.

Another attraction on the tours are health facilities in Sun City, including the Biogerontology Center, where studies on aging are being conducted.

Volunteerism in Sun City also is stressed. The Prides, who keep the landscaping and streets clean, and

the Posse, which helps the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, are among the groups that are touted.

The "premier adult community" is how Sun City was described by German Consul Renate Friedemann after a June visit.

"Indeed it was an impressive visit, and I am certain that the beauty of Sun City, the excellence of its recreation facilities and the overall atmosphere of kindness and sincerity represent a highlight of the delegation's visit to the United States," Friedemann wrote in a letter to Wright.

Besides promoting Sun City's lifestyle to visitors who are considering starting similar communities, Wright said the Ambassadors' top goal is to attract new residents to Sun City.

"We get busloads of people visiting as part of tours such as retired farmers from Milwaukee," Wright said.

Sun City and Sun City West are home to people who formerly lived in every state in the United States, every province in Canada and 48 countries, according to the Sun Cities telephone directory.

Sun City supporters start drive to raise \$220,000

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

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Doug Wright, an Ambassadors board member, has been named chairman of the fund-raising campaign.

Visitor's Center deluged with inquiries

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

11-23-91

SUN CITY — The Sun City Visitors Center has been swamped with calls from out-of-town residents wanting to get more information about the retirement community.

The Sun City Ambassadors, who run the visitors center, recently put ads in national service club magazines for Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions with the hopes of drawing prospective residents to Sun City.

The ads included a toll-free telephone number to the visitors center for people to call to get more information about Sun City.

The results have been tremendous, said Mort Reed, president of the Ambassador's 16-member volunteer board of directors.

"Our volunteers manning the phones have been absolutely swamped. In the first three days the ads were out we had 161

calls from people who wanted information about Sun City," Reed said.

Meanwhile, several local residents took up the Ambassadors on an on-going program to place ads in their hometown newspapers. Reed said the newspaper ads generated more than 150 calls.

"The market is out there and I think we have found a way to reach it," Reed said. "We are quite encouraged by the response."

The visitors center, which opened in November 1989, is on the southwest corner of Bell Road and 99th Avenue in the Promenade Shopping Center.

On Friday the 14,000th person entered the visitors center so far this year, bringing the grand to total to more than 30,000, Reed said.

"We are continually getting visitors in here. there are also quite a few Sun City residents who come in to get literature to send to their friends. From that standpoint

we are serving the local people," Reed said.

The ads are one of many programs, projects and activities the Ambassadors sponsor to promote Sun City.

To help support the programs, the Ambassadors launched a fund drive in October and have already received \$32,000. Reed said the group hopes to get \$80,000 in donations from area residents.

"We expect the donations to pick up again right after Thanksgiving. The Sundome campaign is definitely affecting the money we are getting. A lot of people support both endeavors," Reed said.

Reed said the Ambassadors has started concentrating on getting donations from the businesses, professional groups and clubs last week. Teams of two volunteers are calling on the businesses asking for donations.

"We have received three pledges of \$1,500 so far," Reed said.

Word of mouth spreads praises of Sun Cities

Group compiles statistics on who moves here and why

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

2/27/92

SUN CITY — Gene Bunton always dreamed of living on a golf course.

"When I came to look at homes in Sun City I realized that my dream could come true," said Bunton, who moved here two years ago with his wife, Claire.

"We like being with our contemporaries. We like the friendly people and the cleanliness here. I think Sun City is one of the best kept secrets in the United States," Claire Bunton said.

The Buntons are among the many people who have moved to Sun City because they heard about the community from friends.

Statistics compiled by the Sun City Ambassadors show that the vast majority of new residents heard about the community from friends or relatives.

"If we can get people in Sun City to promote this community back in their hometowns, their friends would visit, love the place and settle here," said Frank Smith, marketing chairman of the Ambassador's board of directors.

"To come to a strange place way out in what some people think is barren desert isn't easy. It's up to Sun City to sell itself and I think people are really starting to do it."

The Ambassadors, a non-profit volunteer organization, operates the Sun City Visitors Center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

There, volunteers have been compiling statistics on where Sun City home buyers come from and why they came in the first place.

Of the nearly 2,000 homes sold in Sun City in 1991, about one-third of the buyers moved to another home in the community or from Sun City West, Smith said.

More than 22 percent (450 homes) were purchased from people from other Arizona towns and nearly 46 percent (909 homes) were purchased from

people from outside the state and country.

For the past three years, more people have moved to Sun City from California than from any other state, Smith said.

But percentage wise, that number has slightly decreased (from 20 percent to 18 percent) while states such as Colorado, Minnesota and Washington have shown gains.

More people are also coming to Sun City from Arizona cities and towns such as Dewey, Scottsdale, Surprise, Tucson and Youngtown.

Since California is such a large state, Smith said he decided to survey some of the people who recently moved from the Golden State.

Volunteers questioned 44 of the 128 home buyers who moved to Sun City from California in 1990.

Those surveyed said a number of factors helped them decide: palm trees, affordability, privacy, low taxes, tranquility, recreation centers, weather and churches.

The top attraction is Sun City's cleanliness, Smith said.

"Statistics like this help us know what areas we should target our marketing plan toward and what aspects of the community we should promote," Smith said. "We hope to next do a study of residents who moved here from Illinois or Colorado to see if people from there show the same trends."

Smith said the Ambassadors' marketing campaign, featuring a toll-free number residents can call to get more information about Sun City, has been successful.

"The 1-800 number we installed last summer is seldom quiet. In the first three days after we advertised in newspapers in 16 target cities we had 246 inquiries. ... And all of them received literature," Smith said.

Local residents are also encouraged to place promotional ads in their hometown newspapers.

(over)



Stephen Cherek/Daily News-Sun

2/27/92
Gene and Claire Bunton moved to Sun City after living nearly 30 years in Long Beach, Calif. Statistics from the Sun City Ambassadors show that the majority of new residents are from California.

Ambassadors continue fund drive

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Ambassadors has resumed its 1992 fund drive.

About two months ago the fund drive was suspended because the contract of a professional fund-raiser hired to help the group had expired, said Mort Reed, outgoing president of the Ambassadors.

"Now the volunteers have taken over and are mailing letters out to all the residents and business owners who have not yet contributed to our fund drive," Reed said.

The group has collected about \$55,000 and hopes to raise another \$85,000 this year, Reed said.

The Ambassadors, which operates the Sun City Visitors Center, originally hoped to collect \$200,000 to support an array of programs, projects and activities to promote the retirement community.

Last year, 15,756 people came to the Visitors Center, at 99th Avenue and Bell Road, and another 4,000 have sought literature and tours this year.

Doug Wright, incoming president and tours chairman in 1991, said he has hosted officials from seven foreign countries during tours of Sun City.

"It amazes me how many people write a personal letter of thanks after a tour and say they will be coming back soon for a longer look," Wright said.

The average donation given to the Ambassadors by area residents last fall was \$25, said Norma Pitcairn, Visitors Center office manager.

"We hope our new mailing will encourage those who haven't given to help us revitalize the Sun City that brought us all here," Pitcairn said.

For information, call 977-5000.

Sun City Visitors Center booms with activity

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Nearly 16,000 people stopped at the Sun City Visitors Center in 1991, and officials say they expect this year to be even busier.

In January and February, about 4,600 visited the center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road, said Mort Reed, who was president of the Sun City Ambassadors in 1991.

"We've also had 250 on bus tours on which Sun City is a regularly scheduled highlight," Reed said.

Doug Wright, who is this year's president and was in charge of tours in 1991, said, "It amazes me how many people write a personal letter of thanks after a tour and say they will be coming back soon for a longer look."

The Ambassadors is a non-profit organization of about 175 residents

"Our goal is to raise another \$65,000 from residents and businesses so we can maintain the pace of our present success."

Norma Pitcairn
Treasurer
Ambassadors

and business owners attempting to market Sun City. About 90 volunteers operate the visitors center and provide tours.

They also prepare literature and programs to encourage "active" retirees to visit Sun City and see what it has to offer.

A vacation package is offered for people staying in Valley hotels who want to sample Sun City's lifestyle. They are given a free one-week pass to Sun City Recre-

ation Centers and a one-day pass for golf and bowling, said June Ruick, assistant office manager of the Sun City Visitors Center.

The Ambassadors' marketing campaign is directed by Vice President Frank Smith.

"The 800 number we installed last summer is seldom quiet," Smith said. "In the first three days after we advertised in newspapers in 16 target cities, we had 247 inquiries. And all of them received literature."

Sun City residents and businesses are being asked to donate money to support the Ambassadors program.

The fund-raising effort has passed the halfway point of the \$130,000 goal. The average donation by residents was \$25. Del Webb Corp., which developed Sun City, provided \$5,000.

"Our goal is to raise another

\$65,000 from residents and businesses so we can maintain the pace of our present success," said Norma Pitcairn, manager of the visitors center and treasurer of the Ambassadors.

"We hope our new mailing will encourage those who haven't given to help us revitalize the Sun City that brought us all here."

Money raised will be used for advertising, operation of the visitors center and displays at senior expos at selected state fairs.

A future program would be a "street of dreams," which would demonstrate how older residences in Phase 1 of Sun City, which was built in 1960, could be remodeled to increase their marketability, Pitcairn said.

Besides attracting people from throughout the United States, the Ambassadors have hosted visitors from 20 countries.

Sun City gets 'northern exposure'

Canadian researches retirement lifestyles

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — While a member of the Canadian Parliament was visiting Washington, D.C., earlier this month, he was told there was only one place to truly get a grasp of the ideal retirement lifestyle.

"I was told in D.C. that to get the best experience for senior housing and lifestyle, you have to go to Sun City," said Nelson Riis, leader of the New Democratic Party House Caucus in the British Columbia House of Commons.

"Our government at the national and provincial levels is interested in various public and private sector senior projects and Sun City is touted as the most impressive."

Riis and another member of Parliament have been touring the United States for a month as a guest of the U.S. State Department.

On Thursday he visited the Sun City Visitors Center and was given a tour of the community by Sun City Ambassadors volunteers.

The purpose of the program is to familiarize Canadian government officials with America and establish ties.

Among Riis' many interests and fact-finding missions was to find out what amenities there are in the United States that exclusively serve senior citizens.

"I wanted to see how America provides for people's retirement years in terms of social services and pension systems and housing. We have what I would call mini-Sun Cities, but nothing like this," Riis said. "Our handicap is that six months of the year is in deep freeze. People are less active, have to shovel snow, so a lot of them go away. Many Canadians winter here in Sun City or in nearby communities."

More than 60 people from Canada bought homes in Sun City from 1989 to 1991, Ambassadors records show. Hundreds more already live in Sun City or winter here, said June Charles, first vice presi-



Stephen Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Nelson Riis, a member of the House of Commons in British Columbia, talks with Sun Citian June Charles, first vice president of the Sun City Ambassadors.

Charles, who gave Riis an overview of Sun City and the services available here, said the visitors center has had more than 8,000 visitors since January.

"It's because we are so unique. We have so much here. Sun City is a community and not just a

City Ambassadors. Riis visited Sun City on Thursday to get a taste for what he calls the ultimate senior lifestyle.

retirement development. So when people come here they can see a total community in action," Charles said.

In addition to Sun City, Riis has traveled to New York, Boston, Tennessee, Texas, California, Nevada and leaves for Albuquerque today.

See Nevada piques, A5

Nevada piques Canada's interest

—From A1

In Nevada, his interests turned to gambling — a prospect his government is considering to make money.

"I saw both the good and bad aspects by visiting casino operators, the gaming commission and social service agencies," Riis said. "In my judgment, the negatives outweigh the positives. I think some people would be shocked if they knew the extensive human carnage associated with gambling. But some

gaming is pretty much inevitable."

He said his interests in New Mexico will deal with Native Americans.

About 1.5 of the 26 million residents in Canada are some sort of "native" descent, Riis said.

The House of Commons has three parties, Conservatives, Liberals and Social Democrats.

Since the Conservatives have the majority, their party is in power and the other two are considered "opposition parties," Riis said.

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 6, 1992 — SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

Ambassadors report increase in SC visitors

Visitors Center reports steady stream of visits by Americans and foreigners

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

If you're thinking Sun City seems just a bit more crowded these days, you're correct.

During a recent three-month period, there was a 10 percent increase in the number of visitors to the Sun City Visitors Center, says Bob Harris, chairman of the Sun City Home Owners Association/Ambassadors Liaison Committee.

From June through August, 2,017

people visited the Visitors Center — and June proved to be the busiest month with 710 tourists passing through the center.

"The average is a little over 10 percent for the three-month period," Mr. Harris says.

In the past year, 11,426 tourists passed through the center. This figure is expected to increase to more than 16,000 by the end of the year, Mr. Harris says.

The Visitors Center, 9903 W. Bell Road, is operated daily by the Ambassadors, a group of volunteers

who provide brochures, sound tapes and trained tour guides for groups. The Visitors Center, which opened in 1989, attracted 16,292 visitors in 1990 and 15,756 in 1991, Mr. Harris says.

Sun City attracts 40 new residents a week, he adds.

"Two-thousand people a year are moving into Sun City," he says. "I've had enough visitors who, when I'm through with them, they can't wait to get here."

The majority of visitors are not as impressed with the white walls or the golf courses as they are by the beauty of the Sun Cities, says Martha Moyer, public and

See ■ VISITORS, Page 3

over

community relations manager for Del Webb's Sun City West.

"The No. 1 comment is that people are so impressed with the cleanliness of Sun City and Sun City West," Ms. Moyer says.

Vacations and the search for a place to retire bring visitors to the Sun Cities, Ms. Moyer says.

"I think a majority of them are doing research, finding where they want to retire," she says.

"I know of one family in particular who came out to visit their daughter. It never even occurred to them to buy into an adult community. Before they left, they bought the biggest house on a golf course."

In addition to visitors from other states, the Sun Cities attract a large number of visitors from other countries, Mr. Harris says.

"I think the foreign visitors are interested (in the community), but more in interpreting what we have here into their countries. The Japanese are interested in duplicating what we have here. (In Japan) they can't do the same thing we do, because of space," he says.

Although Sun City, with a population of 46,000, has been

fully developed since 1978, Sun City West is still expanding, with a population approaching 22,000. The Del Webb Corp. plans to expand Sun City West by 1,320 acres, which would add 6,000 residents to the community.

"For Sun City West, the new population will be 31,000," Ms. Moyer says. "Through out sales pavillion, we have in excess of 120,000 visitors yearly. We have an incredible volume of traffic."

During the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1991, and ending June 30, 1992, 773 homes were sold in Sun City West, Ms. Moyer says.

"This accounts for approximately 1,500 new residents," she says. "Between Sun City and Sun City West, all 50 states and 50 foreign countries are represented."

The majority of homeowners in Sun City and Sun City West hail from California and Arizona, Ms. Moyer says.

"About 30 percent of our new home sales go to Californians. In 1987, 14 percent of our new home sales went to Californians. Two years later, it climbed to 29 percent."

Ms. Moyer says she thinks those from California are attracted to the Sun City area because of the sunshine and the affordable housing.

Arizona residents are also in the majority when it comes to buying homes in the Sun Cities.

"In the last fiscal year, current Sun City West residents accounted for 21 percent of new home sales," Ms. Moyer says.



The Sun City Visitors Center, located in Campana Square on 99th Avenue and Bell Road, reports a 10 percent increase in the number of visitors to Sun City this past summer compared to 1991. The center provides informational material about the community, as well as tours of Sun City.

Ambassadors spread the word about Sun City

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — It started as an idea and has blossomed into a focal point in Sun City that attracts visitors from Austria to Atlanta.

More than 50,000 people have walked through the doors of the Sun City Visitors Center since it opened Nov. 3, 1989.

And every year since the grand opening, the Visitors Center has reached another milestone.

"We have had nearly 1,000 more visitors so far this year than we had last year," said Doug Wright, president of the Sun City Ambassadors. "We get busloads of tourists, parliamentarians, governors, educators and many local residents who come to the Visitors Center to see what Sun City is all about."

The vision of a Visitors Center began with the Sun City Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors has evolved from a group that met monthly in 1986 to an organization with working committees and volunteers who staff the Visitor Center seven days a week.

Since 1987, five presidents have played an integral part in nurturing the Visitors Center.

The five gathered at the Visitors Center Monday to celebrate the fourth anniversary and view a video the Ambassadors has produced to promote Sun City.

Dick King, the first Ambassadors president, is credited as the brainchild for the non-profit volunteer-run group.

King and Jerry Svendsen, publisher of Sun Life magazine and former vice president of public relations for Del Webb Corp., worked to incorporate the Ambassadors and opened a small office on Del Webb Boulevard.

"We had the Visitors Center concept from the very beginning. We felt the promotion of Sun City was fading and we wanted to create some sort of group that would serve as ambassadors to the community," said King, a Sun City Realtor.

"It's just great. It gives me real fuzzies to see what has happened," King said.

The vision of the Visitors Center became a reality in 1989 under the leadership of Ambassadors President Sid Menk, a retired Sun City minister.

"We had a rally at the Sundome that attracted 2,000 people and the next day hosted a ribbon-cutting

ceremony at the center," Menk said.

"We achieved a goal in much less time than we anticipated. It was a very important and much needed step in the life of Sun City."

Tom Nash, who served as treasurer of the Ambassadors board before he was president in 1990, said he was initially wary about opening a Visitors Center in Sun City.

"Here the Ambassadors were with a buck two eighty to their name and we were committing to a lease. I was the only board member who voted against creating a Visitors Center," said Nash, who works for Northern Trust. "I thought it was too expensive, too bold. But right away I saw that things were coming together and I realized it was the right thing to do."

Nash said many "big brothers" in the community volunteered their time, expertise and money to make the Visitors Center dream into a reality.

Denny Ryerson, president of The Ryerson Co., networked to get donations and an ideal retail location — on the southwest corner of 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

Other volunteer residents and business people helped turn the empty building into an office.

"If you have a physical presence then you get the credibility. For a while there it was not clear if Sun City would be a major destination point for retirees and maintain the identity as a premium upscale retirement committee," Nash said.

Sun Citian Mort Reed, immediate past Ambassadors president, helped provide a mission statement for the group: attracting retirees to Sun City, maintaining the Visitors Center and cooperating with area businesses, service clubs and residents.

"In the early days a lot of people did not understand what the Ambassadors were trying to do and thought it was a waste," Reed said. "A mission statement helped keep us in focus."

Sun Citian Norma Pitcarin has managed the Visitors Center since it opened.

"I think each one of our presidents have done so much for our success and have been eloquent spokesmen for the Ambassadors and Visitors Center," she said. "We started with about 40 volunteers and now have more than 100. It's just wonderful how enthusiastic they are about this great place that so many people from all over the world come to see."



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Since 1987, five Sun City Ambassadors presidents have played an integral part in nurturing the Visitors Center into what it is today. The five, from left, Dick

King, Sid Menk, Tom Nash, Mort Reed and Doug Wright got together recently to mark the center's fourth anniversary.

Video offers 11-minute tour of SC

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Trying to describe Sun City's diverse clubs, recreation centers and lifestyle could take hours.

But the Sun City Ambassadors has done their best to sum up life in the retirement community in 11 minutes.

As the operators of the Sun City Visitors Center, the Ambassadors has compiled a video geared to attract potential Sun City residents.

"It's an excellent video that tells in 11 minutes the story of the lifestyle of Sun City," said Doug Wright, Ambassadors president. "This has consolidated all we have to say about this wonderful community."

The public is invited to view the

video during November when the Visitors Center celebrates its fourth anniversary.

The center, on the southwest corner of 99th Avenue and Bell Road, opened its doors Nov. 3, 1989. Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Copies of the video may be purchased for a minimum donation of \$5. Cassettes that are compatible with overseas technology are available for \$10.

Sun Citian Frank Smith, chairman of the Ambassadors marketing committee, said he thinks many local residents will want copies to send to their friends and family.

The video highlights the recreation

centers, various clubs and activities, the variety of health and housing options in the community and more.

"We wanted to include a composite of what we feel was important in Sun City," Smith said. "We already sold 16 tapes to members of a Japanese delegation who toured Sun City last week."

Sun Citian Felix Pfaeffle helped Smith write the script. Dan Baker of Sun City West narrates.

The video, made by a Phoenix television station, cost about \$5,000 and was funded through donations from the Daily News-Sun, Sun Cities Area Board of Realtors, Sun Health Corp. and Del Webb Corp.

Sun City Visitors Center attracts thousands

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Thousands of people are flocking to Sun City to see why it has an international reputation as a premier retirement community.

More than 50,000 people have passed through the doors of the Sun City Visitors Center since it opened three years ago.

"That number doesn't include the busloads of people who come on tours and the dignitaries from all over the world who visit Sun City as part of a study on retirement living," said the Rev. Doug Wright, president of the Sun City Ambassadors. The Ambassadors are a kind of booster club for the community.

Visitors represent every state in the United States, every Canadian province and 20 other countries, Wright said.

About 100 Sun City Ambassadors volunteer at the center, at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

Wright described the visitor center's success during Tuesday's Sun City Taxpayers Association board meeting.

When Sun City opened its model homes 32 years ago, about 100,000 people jammed Grand Avenue, waiting to tour them.

At Sun City's peak, its population reached 47,000.

But Webb left Sun City in 1979 to start developing Sun City West. The developer's departure, Wright said, left Sun City without a marketing program.

"Sun City was competing with other retirement villages whose developers were spending millions of dollars in advertising," he said.

The result, he said, was damaging. About 1,800 Sun City homes were going unsold because their original residents died or moved into nursing homes. Churches and synagogues lost members. Businesses lost customers.

A group of residents and busi-

ness owners decided to organize the non-profit Sun City Ambassadors.

"We decided we needed to tell the story of Sun City to the outside world," Wright said.

With the opening of the visitors center in November 1989, the Ambassadors are reaching thousands of people.

"We have been very successful," Wright said. "The number of unsold homes at one time has dropped from 1,800 to 500, and Realtors are looking for new listings."

However, Wright said, the Ambassadors are not in the real estate business. They promote the Sun City lifestyle, he said.

The visitors center provides free literature, tours and information about services in Sun City.

A new 11-minute video of Sun City is available for a \$5 donation. It showcases community facilities, including recreational, shopping and medical. There are tours of homes and a sampling of the Sun City lifestyle. About 800 tapes already have been sold.

The Ambassadors also advertise Sun City in newspapers in the Midwest.

After a storm dumped 14 inches of snow in a Midwestern town in March, Wright said the center's toll-free number was ringing off the hook.

Nice weather is a good selling point, Wright said.

But more importantly, he said, Sun City has gained an international reputation as being a premier retirement community.

A travel brochure for tours from Milwaukee describes Sun City as being "internationally recognized for its exceptional beauty, plus landscaping and a tremendous amount of local pride."

Wright said dignitaries from foreign countries visit Sun City to learn how they can cope with the serious problems facing their elderly.

He said the consul general of Germany wrote that he was impressed with Sun City's "excellence of its recreational facilities and the overall atmosphere of kindness and sincerity."

The visitors center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

A fund-raising campaign for the visitors center gets under way this month. The goal is about \$120,000.

Contributions may be sent to P.O. Box 2481, Sun City 85372.

Area attractions lure thousands to Sun City

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

Ambassadors promote positive community image

The Sun City Ambassadors, a non-profit organization formed in 1986 to build awareness and support of Sun City, opened the Sun City Visitors Center in November 1989.

The Visitors Center introduces and provides information on the Sun City life-style through brochures, audio-visual presentations and guided tours.

A videotape depicting "the whole Sun City experience from beginning to end" was made in 1992 and is available for purchase for a \$5 donation at the Visitors Center.

The tape is 12 minutes long, says Frank Smith, marketing chairman for the Sun City Ambassadors and producer of the tape.

"We cover all aspects of Sun City," he says.

Since the Visitors Center opened, it has consistently attracted thousands of visitors, says Bob Harris, Visitors Center volunteer.

The Visitors Center attracted more than 16,000 visitors in 1992, 15,756 in 1991 and 16,292 visitors in 1990, Mr. Harris says.

"The way visitors are coming in, I think we'll have an increase of 10 percent in 1993," he says.

"With the addition of the new shopping center (at Bell Road and 83rd Avenue), the Mariners and Padres (baseball teams training in Peoria this spring), this is going to be a real good year for visitors coming through."

Sun City attracts 40 new residents weekly, Mr. Harris says.

"Two-thousand people a year are moving into Sun City," he says. "I've had enough visitors who, when I'm through with them, they can't wait to get here."

The majority of visitors are not as impressed with the white walls or the golf courses as they are with the beauty of the

Sun Cities, says Martha Moyer, public and community relations manager for Del Webb's Sun City West.

Vacations and the search for a place to retire bring visitors to the Sun Cities, Ms. Moyer says.

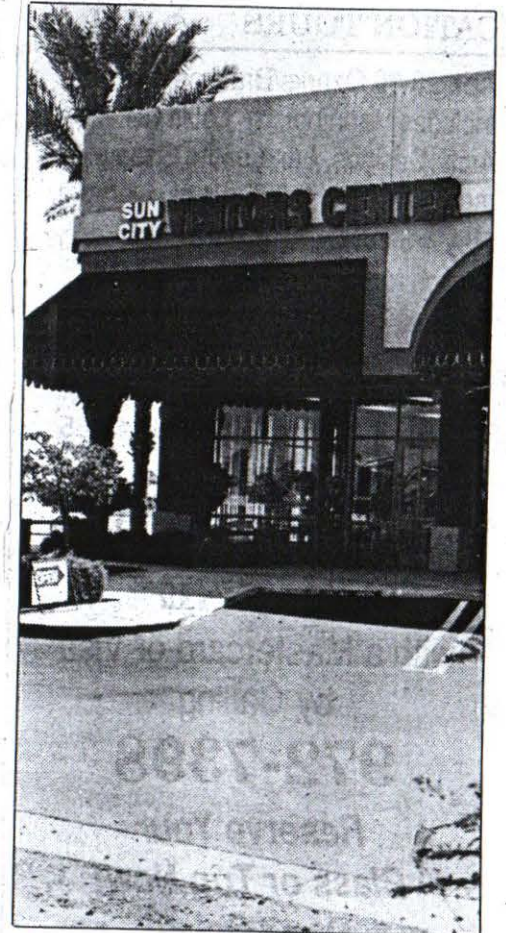
"I think a majority of them are doing research, finding where they want to retire," she says.

"I know of one family in particular who came out to visit their daughter. It never even occurred to them to buy into an adult community. Before they left, they bought the biggest house on the golf course."

In addition to visitors from other states, the Sun Cities attract a large number of visitors from other countries, Mr. Harris says.

AMBASSADORS

VF



More than 40 people a week visit Sun City and, for many, their first stop is the Sun City Visitors Center in the Promenade Shopping on 99th Avenue and Bell Road. The center is operated by the Sun City Ambassadors.

Ambassadors aim to promote Sun City

40 new residents move in weekly

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

Thirty-four years after it first opened its doors to retirees, Sun City continues to attract new residents by the thousands each year.

In the early days, many residents were introduced to the new active-adult retirement concept through glossy advertisements placed by the Webb Corp. in some of the nation's most popular magazines and newspapers.

New residents still find their way to Sun City via magazine advertisements and brochures. But today a group of mostly volunteer residents — and not the Webb Corporation — is primarily responsible for promoting Sun City throughout the nation and the world.

The Sun City Ambassadors, an organization formed in 1986 to enhance the awareness and support of Sun City, opened the Sun City Visitors Center in November 1989.

The Visitors Center provides information on the Sun City lifestyle through brochures, audiovisual presentations and guided tours.

A videotape depicting "the whole Sun City experience from beginning to end" was made in 1992 and is available for \$5. Because of the large number of Japanese visitors,

videotapes in Japanese are available for \$10 each, says Norma Pitcairn, office manager at the Visitors Center.

The Visitors Center attracted 17,582 visitors in 1993, 17,126 visitors in 1992, 15,756 visitors in 1991 and 16,292 in 1990, Ms. Pitcairn says.

Bob Harris, a volunteer at the center, attributes the burgeoning number of visitors to increased traffic traveling to and from the Arrowhead Towne Center northeast of 83rd Avenue and Bell Road and the Peoria Sports Complex southeast of 83rd Avenue and Bell Road, which is set to open in February.

Ms. Pitcairn thinks the increase in visitor traffic can be traced to an aggressive marketing program sponsored by the Ambassadors.

"We feel the increase is due to our marketing program. We're trying to reach our local people to bring their house guests and visitors in."

Sun City attracts 40 new residents weekly, Mr. Harris says.

"Two-thousand people a year are moving into Sun City," he says. "I've had enough visitors who, when I'm through with them, they can't wait to get here."

The majority of visitors are not as impressed with the white walls or the golf courses as they are with the

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Vacations and the search for a place to retire bring visitors to the Sun Cities, Ms. Moyer says.

"I think a majority of them are doing research, finding where they want to retire," she says.

"I know of one family in particular who came out to visit their daughter. It never even occurred to them to buy into an adult community. Before they left, they bought the biggest house on the golf course."

In addition to visitors from other states, the Sun Cities attract a large number of visitors from other countries, Mr. Harris says.

In 1993, Visitors Center volunteers served as guides for 26 groups. Last year, residents of Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and Morocco visited the center.

The 26 tours were taken by 586 people, 321 from other countries and 265 potential Sun City residents, Ms. Pitcairn says.

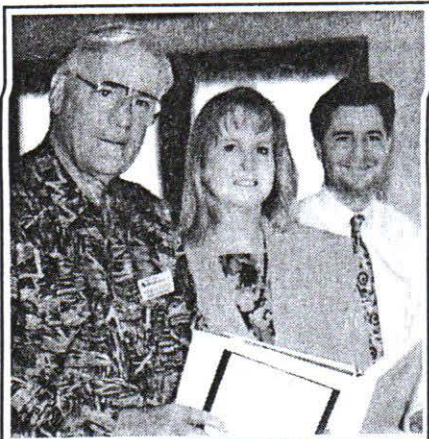
The center, operated by a volunteer staff, is located at 99th Avenue and Bell Road in the Promenade shopping center and is open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 977-5000 or 1-800-437-8146.



The Sun City Visitors Center, opened by the Sun City Ambassadors in 1989, provides information on the area lifestyle through brochures, audiovisual presentations and guided tours.

Promotion by Ambassadors keeps Sun City thriving

In the mid-1980s a number of Sun City residents and businesspeople simultaneously realized that the famous adult community in which they lived and/or worked was in need of some good, solid, positive promotional exposure.



AMBASSADOR BOARD OFFICERS for 1994 include, from left, Milt Meyer, president; Jan McKinney, first vice president; and Kevin Hindman, secretary. Officers not pictured are Norma Pitcairn, June Charles, second vice president, and Pam Meyerhoffer, past president.

The community developed by the Del Webb Corporation was about built out; by 1980 Webb was expending its marketing efforts on its newest community, Sun City West.

Those who had moved to Sun City during the early years of its founding were now looking for the security and conveniences of neighboring retirement community complexes. Their homes were going on the market, a market that had never quite recovered from an early 80s recession.

In addition, there was no

organized effort to promote the community that for some two decades was Del Webb's nationally known pride and joy.

It was this lack of home resales that brought a group of area citizens and business leaders together to form the Sun City Ambassadors. A small office and visitors center was opened in 1988 at Bell Road and Boswell Boulevard.

The location was less than ideal. Professional offices needn't be visible – but it's an absolute requirement for a visitors center. The search was on for better facilities.

It took persuasive voices to obtain a lease and remodel space at Promenade Mall at 99th Avenue and Bell Road. Local electricians, plumbers, contractors and businessmen – many of them board members – donated their labor plus tile, bookshelves, paint, air conditioning, phones, furniture, signs, a television and a copier.



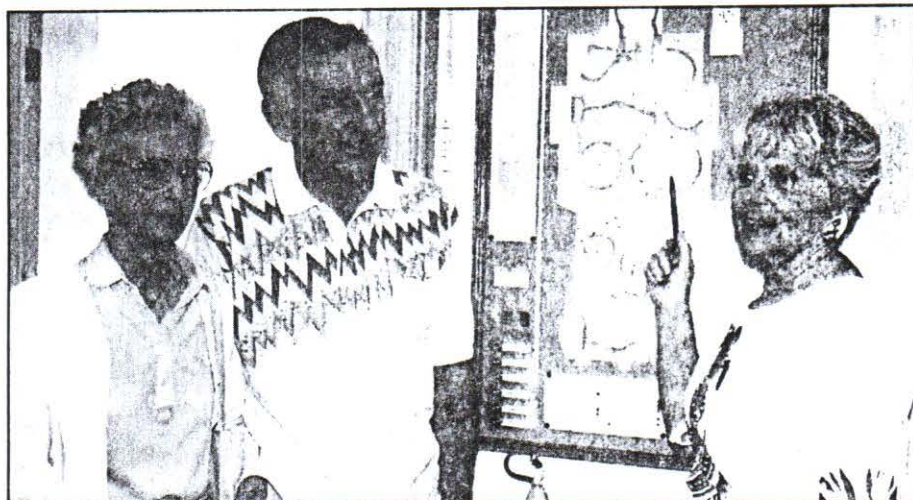
THESE KEY AMBASSADORS are Office Manager Norma Pitcairn and Marketing Chairman Ed Neville.

The Ambassadors introduced their new Visitors Center to the world in November 1989.

Promoting worldwide

Today the Sun City Visitors Center promotes its community and surrounding area through videos, brochures in seven languages, and a multitude of information.

More than 100 resident volunteers, under the direction of volunteer coordinator June Ruick, greet visitors, answer phones and questions and tout Sun City as an affordable adult community with recre-



THIS MAP'S AGLOW – Map at the Visitors Center lights up to reveal area golf courses, recreation and shopping centers, and other local highlights. Volunteer Edith Wendt, right, assists Mr. and Mrs. George Lopez of Phoenix.

over

ation centers, golf courses, libraries, shopping centers, medical facilities and more.

The mission of the Ambassadors and the Visitors Center, is to promote Sun City to potential residents, to enhance its image and to facilitate cohesiveness and interaction within Sun City.

The Ambassadors take their Sun City promotional endeavors to Senior Expos in Minnesota, California and Arizona. They place advertisements and submit stories to publications throughout the world.

More than 66,000 people have passed through the center since it opened. Hours, September through May, are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday – Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Summer hours are reduced.

The center serves residents and visitors alike with information about entertainment, churches, sporting events, classes and transportation.

“We don’t sell real estate,” said Officer Manager Norma Pitcairn, “but by our promotion, we keep home values up.”

What’s particularly amazing is the fact that the Visitors Center was not only refurbished and furnished by donations, but its sole funding source is donations from residents and businesses. The year-long campaign begins every January with 27,500 letters sent to Sun City residents asking for support.

Today the Sun City Ambassadors and their Visitors Center have the wholehearted support of the community. And just like Sun City was a model for retirement communities that followed, it may be the model for other communities who face eventual independent promotional challenges. ☀



FILLING THE RACKS with information for visitors to the center, are, from left, volunteers Wayne Meyers, Pat Hogan, Richard Ward and Volunteer Coordinator June Ruick.

Norma manages quite well, thank you!

Norma S. Pitcairn, who moved to Sun City in 1976, is the office manager at the Sun City Visitors Center. A former resident of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Naples, Fla., she was an active golfer before taking over the day-to-day duties at the visitors center.

Norma implements the directives of the Board of Directors, a group composed of Sun City residents and business and professional people who have offices in Sun City.

In addition to playing bridge, attending the theater and reading books, Norma is a member of Faith Presbyterian Church, Willowbrook Ladies Golf Association and Lakes Club.

SUN CITY VISITORS CENTER . . . THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION

Annually, the Sun City Visitors Center welcomes and assists thousands of Sun Citians, their visiting friends and/or family members and area vacationers.

The Center offers the following:

- An abundance of information to tell the Sun City story including brochures, maps and magazines.
- A video depicting the many benefits and attractions of the Sun City lifestyle.
- Guided tours of the various area facilities - lavish recreation complexes, sparkling clean neighborhoods, and convenient shopping centers.

Our courteous and competent volunteers look forward to welcoming you. We are prominently located in the Promenade Shopping Center, on the Southwest corner of 99th Avenue and Bell Road.



SUN CITY VISITORS CENTER Manned by Volunteers **SUN CITY, ARIZONA**

99th Avenue and Bell Road • 1-800-437-8146 • 977-5000



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Volunteer ambassadors, from left, Jerry Fintak, Pat Popp and Rita Lucas staff the Sun City Visitors Center.

Be our guests

Ambassadors' roles expand at visitors center

By J.J. McCORMACK
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The president of the Sun City Ambassadors says giving to the group of volunteers that staff the Sun City Visitors Center is a lot like giving to yourself.

"If the residents of Sun City and the business community can't give because they don't have it to give, that's certainly understandable. But this is an area of giving where it actually comes right back to Sun City," said Bud Hart.

The Ambassadors president and executive director of the Royal Oaks retirement community extolled the benefits of the 5-year-old Ambassadors organization and its visitors center after volunteers wrapped up the group's annual fund-raising mailing.

Requests for donations went out to about 27,000 Sun City homes and businesses, said Norma Pitcairn, Ambassadors treasurer and office manager for the visitors center.

The visitors center, located in the Promenade shopping center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road, relies solely on private contributions to sustain

operations. It costs the Ambassadors about \$100,000 annually to operate the center, which provides visitors with information about the Sun City lifestyle, guided tours of the community and referrals to local businesses and services.

"It's retired people talking to retired people," Hart said. "It's not like a sales pitch."

Pitcairn said the popularity of the visitors center has increased every year among visitors and residents alike.

"We feel many of the new residents of Sun City made their first stop here," she said.

The Ambassadors budget money annually for marketing activities such as promotional brochures and advertisements in national magazines.

The marketing function of the center is important, Hart said, to renew interest in Sun City.

"When Del Webb was doing so much advertising for Sun City, it wasn't a secret. Then the advertising stopped," he said.

The Ambassadors picked up where Webb left off, Hart said.

"Our most important purpose is to promote Sun City and to bring people to Sun City. That benefits everyone in Sun City," Hart said.

Rent, utilities, supplies and salaries for two part-time staffers, office manager and volunteer coordinator, consume the balance of the Ambassadors' operating budget.

"We keep our expenses to the bare bones," Pitcairn said.

Hart said the Ambassadors doesn't have a specific fund-raising goal this year.

"Our goal is to be able to stay in business. Without the donations, the Ambassadors closes up," he said.

Pitcairn said donations were down some last year. She said she is hopeful that new residents and businesses will help make this year's fund drive a success.

Businesses especially stand to gain from the work of the Ambassadors, Pitcairn said.

"We're asking for their help as an investment in the future of Sun City. As we succeed in bringing newcomers to Sun City, each is a potential customer," she said.

Contributions to Visitors Centers essential to community

In the first quarter of 1999, the numbers of visitors, tours and contributions to the Sun City Visitors Center was below comparable figures for 1998. Directors of the Sun City Ambassadors are concerned.

"Almost half of our visitors come in the first three months of the year," according to Lila Stephens, director of the Visitors Center. "Last year, for example, 6,135 of the year's total of 13,543 came in the first three months. This year we had 5,428 through March 31. And last year's total was the lowest in the 12-year history of the center."

There seems to be several reasons for the drops. Many of the tour groups come from Japan, and with

its weak economy, the Japanese aren't traveling as much. Also, the proliferation of retirement communities nearby has drawn the interest of retirees away from Sun City. Then, with Sun City West having its own Visitors Center and Ambassadors organization, not connected with ours in any way, business contributors may not realize that money they give to our newer neighbors doesn't help us in Sun City at all.

Not so easily explained is why contributions to the Sun City Ambassadors from Sun City residents are down a third from last year, not only in number but in amount. Except for the Visitors Center at 99th and Bell, our visibility in the com-

munity is low, because all our efforts are directed outside it, not inside it. We have a Website on the Internet and advertise in magazines aimed at couples of retirement age which continue to bring inquiries. That's one reason prices of homes sold have held up well. But unless we promote Sun City, its residents won't have a good market when it comes time to sell. It was a weak housing market that brought about the formation of the Ambassadors in 1987."

Plans are already under way for a fall fund drive, but contributions may be made at any time to the Sun City Ambassadors.

Ed Anderson
Sun City

JULY 8-14, 1998 — SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

RCSC to help fund update of Ambassadors video

Sun City Rec Centers provide \$1,200 for promotional videotape

By MIKE RUSSO
Independent Newspapers

It won't exactly be Hollywood comes to Sun City, but cameras should soon be rolling in Sun City.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors last month approved a \$1,200 request from the Sun City Ambassadors to update their community promotional video.

The measure passed 7-0, with board members Don Pritchett and Chuck Chadbourn being absent, despite the protests of several audience members.

Board Vice President Bud Moriarty said, "The money we would be allotting ... would be used to redo the video that tells about Sun City and the brochure."

He further pointed out that "a one-minute revision to the video

costs \$1,200."

Director Dick Ohnstad noted it would be much less expensive for the Rec Centers to help fund the update of the Ambassadors' video than it would be for the Rec Centers to produce its own video touting the advantages of living in Sun City.

"It's \$1,200 for one minute, so it would be \$12,000 for a 10-minute video," he said, thereby making the Ambassadors donation very cost-effective.

The enthusiasm the directors voiced for the project was not shared by several audience members who spoke in opposition to funding the request.

Max Bromley referred to page 2 of the board's Legal Advisory Book which indicates the board should not make donations to outside agencies.

"On Nov. 16, 1989, the board denied a funding request from the Ambassadors," he said. "The logic is mystifying — the board is trying to raise revenues while giving a

\$1,200 donation to the Ambassadors."

Beryl Cropley opined, "It is my feeling the Rec Centers has no business making contributions to anybody."

The board "has a greater responsibility with handling our money than their own," observed Arthur Nault.

"There are many worthy causes," he continued. "It is not the function of the Rec Centers to contribute to all these worthy causes."

Director Ed McCrea noted this was not a case of the Rec Centers just making a donation to another

organization.

"In most of the communities across the country from which you people moved, there was a chamber of commerce," he said. "The Ambassadors are the chamber of commerce for Sun City."

"They have been doing a wonderful job," offered Mr. Moriarty.

"I'm opposed to giving out money so liberally," chimed in Director Dick Elton. "However, this is a specific cause that will benefit Sun City. I was originally opposed to this idea and that is why I asked it be tabled in May, but I will be voting for it today."

SC Visitors Center gets makeover

By RUTHANN HOGUE
Staff writer

The Sun City Visitors Center might not be a candidate for major cosmetic surgery for years to come, but with worn out carpet and disintegrating blinds, a summer makeover is more than welcome.

It is, after all, Sun City's most prominent showcase. More than 115,000 curious guests have passed through its doors since it opened in 1989.

While high-volume traffic over the years has not left the busy visitors center in shambles, it has taken its toll. And with a shiny new visitors center a few minutes away in Sun City West, a little cosmetic attention seems to be in order.

"We think it's important for the community to put its best foot forward at the visitors center," said Tom Nash, president of the Sun City Ambassadors Board of Directors.

Members of the board of directors of the Sun City Home Owners Association agree.

The HOA this month voted to donate up to \$700 to replace the sun-damaged vertical window blinds of its sister organization.

Aging, blue, puckered carpet with bubbles and ridges that cannot be repaired will soon be yanked, too. Commercial grade, coral-colored carpet will be laid in its place sometime this summer.

"Redecorating the Visitors Center is important because it has become an enormous sense of pride for the community," Nash said.

The visitors center was last given a fresh look in 1995. Volunteers from Royal Oaks Lifecare Community donated labor and materials to give the center a fresh coat of paint. Sun City Bank donated several new chairs for the media room. Nearby York Furniture donated a table and chairs so that volunteers could sit and chat with guests.

Norma Pitcairn of the Sun City

Ambassadors Board of Directors and treasurer of the Sun City Visitors Center said new filing cabinets and other minor items are on her current wish list of things the center needs.

In addition, non-cosmetic changes, are in the works. The center's glossy brochure featuring a color aerial photograph of the Lakeview Recreation Center is being revised. Rather than listing amenities common to all local retirement communities, the new version will highlight the services available only in Sun City. The idea is to attract prospective homebuyers to look at resale homes in Sun City instead of buying homes in newer Del Webb developments.

"If we aren't getting the word out about the many joys of living in Sun City, nobody else is doing it," Nash said.

Not even its founding corporation, Del Webb.

Although Del Webb's website on the Internet touts Sun City West and Sun City Grand, it does not acknowledge the existence of Maricopa County's original Sun City.

Nash, who recognizes that the way today's seniors access information is changing, said he would like to see the visitors center enter the computer age with a data base and a homepage of its own. That way, prospective homeowners from around the world could visit a virtual visitors center in cyberspace from the comfort of their own homes.

"In terms of supporting our mission base, we don't have the technology," Nash said. "We rely on an electric typewriter and hard copy. We don't have a data base."

With a data base, the Ambassadors could track statistics that would help them recognize and keep pace with changing needs of retirees who visit. It would also help volunteers to quickly match specific needs of guests with services offered in Sun City.

Although computerization of the visitors center is not a priority, Pitcairn said that upgrading technology will be necessary in the future.

"I do recognize that we have to work into that," she said.

Got questions? Ambassadors have answers

Sun City center worth a visit

By Jim Gintonio
The Arizona Republic

SUN CITY — The man walked into the office, looked around and asked, "Is this the know-it-all office?"

Although the Sun City Visitors Bureau doesn't claim to have all the answers, it can usually provide more than enough information for anyone who walks through the doors.

"This is the logical first place to stop," said Lila Stephens, the manager of the visitors center. "We have a lot of information to give."

With Sun City's 40th anniversary coming up, the Ambassadors, the guiding hand behind the center, hope to take a leading role in the festivities, according to Stephens.

"We should be front and center," she said. "We help people and businesses."

The Ambassadors, who were incorporated in July 1987, are composed of 15 business leaders, three Recreation Centers board members and three representatives from the Home Owners Association.

Overall, the club has about 100 volunteers to assist newcomers and established residents. In 10 years, more than 140,000 quizzical visitors have walked through the doors at 99th Avenue and Bell Road in

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This is the logical first place to stop. We have a lot of information to give.

LILA STEPHENS
SUN CITY VISITORS BUREAU
MANAGER

search of answers, or maybe just to grab a cup of coffee and have a few cookies.

Newcomers also get the chance to see a movie to learn about the history of Sun City and what the community has to offer.

Mort Reed, a volunteer, said there was a threefold reason for the formation of the center.

"Del Webb had stopped promoting Sun City and began promoting Sun City West," he said. "Also, life-care facilities were opening, and that's what drew those settlers here, and three, the financial market suffered a depression. There was a need to reach out."

The club, which is run strictly on donations, is open full days during the winter and half-days during the summer. Information: (623) 977-5000.

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Lila Stephens manages the Sun City Visitors Bureau, which is information central for the community.

Sherrie Buzby/The Arizona Republic