

SUN CITY

INDEPENDENT

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Bowling right along

Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw
 Sun City resident Francene Drunskill sends her first ball to the end of the green at the Bell lawn bowl tournament last week. Dr. Sam Magazu, Cigna Medical Group Arizona medical director, inset photo, announced his company's sponsorship of the tournament before play began. See story on page 15.

Kiss your citrus goodbye

Sun City fruit trees being eliminated to save on water

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

There was a time when Sun City visitors traveled along wide boulevards with citrus trees lining the inside lanes in

the medians. That time is quickly passing.

In 2014, the Sun City PRIDES, in cooperation with Maricopa County Department of Transportation, pulled 200 citrus trees growing along Del Webb Boulevard from Bell Road to 99th Avenue. The trees were replaced with low-water desert vegetation.

"Our goal is to eliminate more of the orange trees," said Ken Smith, PRIDES pres-

ident. "We will replace some with desert friendly trees. Once established, they can reduce or eliminate the need for water."

Maricopa County shoulders the cost for water use in its public rights-of-way. County officials have been searching for ways to conserve water for a number of years.

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VI- SC ENVIRONMENT / Ecology Independent January 27, 2016

Citrus

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"They (county officials) came to us to see what we could do to help reduce the water bills," Mr. Smith explained. "That was what started the project on Del Webb."

County officials have no immediate plans for additional citrus tree removals in Sun City, according to Nicole Moon, MCDOT spokeswoman.

"We (county work crews) are taking down the bad oranges and removing dead trees," she explained. "But there are no plans for a mass removal project like the one two years ago."

However, Mr. Smith said the PRIDES have received requests to remove orange trees on Del Webb Boulevard south of Bell Road. He added the group has removed some on Bell Road.

Not everyone, though, liked to see the trees go.

"We've gotten a lot of calls (complaining about citrus removal), but we tell them we must be responsible with water use," Mr. Smith said. "And a lot of those trees are 50 years old."

PRIDES members are topping citrus trees in medians along 107th Avenue to reduce their water use, and eventually they will be eliminated, according to Mr. Smith.

In addition to water use, citrus trees, in public rights-of-way and on private property, can leave a mess if the fruit is not picked from the trees. PRIDES members pick the fruit in the medians, but not on private property.

"We pick fruit on 433 trees on Del Webb and 300 more from Grand to Olive



avenues," Mr. Smith explained. Residents are disappointed the citrus gleaning program was abandoned several years ago. Now it is becoming harder to get private citrus trees picked and disposed of. However, there are options.

"I would encourage people to place ads in craigslist for free fruit, 'you pick,'" said Sun City resident Teri DeGoede. "There are many of us who are not so fortunate to have fruit trees and would gladly glean the trees."

Trees in Sun City roadway medians are not edible, according to Mr. Smith. Fruit companies got fruit from Sun City area orchards and objected when Del Webb planned fruit trees. Genetically engineered nonedible decorative trees were planted instead.

"Because Smuckers no longer wants our citrus, it makes sense to remove the trees," stated resident Katherine Barngrover in an email. "We should be looking at landscaping that doesn't require as much irrigation."

She commends the condo groups that have chosen to remove their grass and switch to desert landscaping.

"It looks so much better than the grass that the rabbits destroy at the roots," she stated.

Adding to the lack of gleaning is the fact that food banks are no longer taking gleaned fruit due to a pest infestation. During the summer of 2015, the Arizona Department of Agriculture issued a quarantine order against the Asia Citrus Psyllid, a pest that can damage citrus fruit in Arizona. Included are areas of Maricopa County.

"Previously, the food banks would welcome fruit donations by providing drop off locations," stated Carole Studdard,

Sun City Home Owners Association marketing director in an e-blast earlier this month. "This was a great benefit to the community with the amount of citrus that needs to be harvested each year."

However, she said the SCHOA Business Partner program includes a number of landscapers and gardeners who glean trees. Visit the SCHOA office, 10401 W. Coggins Drive, the agency's website at www.suncityhoa.org or call 623-974-4718.

Parks and Sons, Sun City's refuse company, will also pick up citrus during regular pickup dates. The requirement is the fruit must be bagged in small kitchen-size trash bags and left next to the in-ground trash container, not placed in the in-ground trash can. No more than 10 bags are able to be picked up on each pickup date.

"My church youth group gleans fruit from my trees and is able to donate it to a men's addiction recovery program we support," stated Carol Jacobson.

While this effort is only available to her church community, she believes there may be other similar programs.

Sun Village Lions has been running a fruit gleaning service for years. While it has been curtailed due to the quarantine, it may resume when it is lifted, according to resident Bob Eschenbacher.

"They might continue to do it, but the fruit would have to be disposed of by the

See Citrus — Page 13
home owner," he stated. "This quarantine

Related Links

www.suncityprides.org

www.mcdot.maricopa.gov

Citrus

Continued From Page 11

has hurt one of their programs.”

In addition to being unsightly, fruit left on the ground can attract wildlife, the most dangerous being rats. Once rats find a source of food that is not removed, they will find a place to nest and remain in the area; nesting areas can also include finding a way into garages, attics, etc.

“The trees use a lot of water, require frequent trimming and annual removal of the unusable fruit,” stated Lee Kreiling in an email expressing support of removal. “While they usually look nice the annual cost is hard to justify.”

His condo association has removed all but three trees from its complex and will remove those when the homeowners give permission.

“We have generally replaced them with ash trees. They haven’t been missed,” he added.

While some Sun City residents are glad to see the citrus removed, others prefer they remain.

“My condo association has many edible citrus and our residents benefit from the grapefruit, orange, tangelo and lemon trees,” Alice Davey stated in an email. “Soon the citrus blossoms will be in bloom and we look forward to their heavenly scent. Yes, let’s keep as many citrus

What do you think?

Do you have an opinion on this issue? Share your comments.

•Email: rbradshaw@newszap.com

as we can.”

Resident Dave Mussaf said his condo association removed trees along the property about one year ago and is now removing them in the interior courtyard.

“It has been difficult to remove the fallen fruit since the gleaning program was terminated,” he stated in an email. “Cutting back the trees was tried but was not a great success.”

Mr. Mussaf said he has heard two concerns about removing citrus trees. In the summer there will be little or no shade and the courtyards will be hotter; residents will have to run air conditioners more often.

“Second, will this really save water?” he asked. “Our water bills have been steadily rising no matter how much we cut back.”

Citrus trees are not the only targets for MCDOT officials in their efforts to cut down the cost of water. They discontinued watering the wide medians with grass for the winter. According to Ms. Moon, restarting the median watering remains under consideration.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Half of alley crumbling away

No one taking responsibility

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Potholes in increasing size and frequency line a two-block alley and it is costing one association more money to maintain its half.

The alley, south of Coggins Drive between 103rd and 105th avenues, is bordered by residences to the south and commercial property to the north. While much of the southern half of the alley is well maintained by the homeowners associations, the other half contains large potholes. They are getting larger and more numerous as days, week, months and even years go by, and no maintenance is performed on the northern half.

"It has gotten so bad that drivers going through the alley always drive on the association half — even when they are going west," said resident

» See Alley on page 3



Charlie Schill points to the deepest of the potholes in the alley behind his home south of Coggins Drive at 105th Avenue. His homeowners association pays to maintain half the alley but the other half is left to deteriorate because no one is claiming ownership. [Independent Newsmedia/Rusty Bradshaw]

Alley

» From page 1

Charlie Schill.

Because the associations own the southern portion of the alley, it is their responsibility to maintain that portion. But according to information association officials can gather, there is no ownership of the northern half, so it never gets attention.

"The county maps say the commercial property ends right where the alley begins," said resident Dave Murphy.

According to county plat maps, the alley is in an easement that encumbers several lots to the south, including a common area, Scott Isham, District 4 Maricopa County Supervisor Clint Hickman's chief of staff, stated in an email.

"An owner's obligation to maintain an alleyway can be determined several ways, including their subdivision's codes, covenants, and restrictions; verbiage on the subdivision's plat; a subdivision's homeowners association; and private agreements entered into between owners," he stated.

The residence side of the alley was repaired not long ago.

"We will have to redo it because the drivers come on our side to avoid the pot-holes and ruts," Mr. Murphy said.

The problem has been constant for more than a decade without a resolution.

"I have been here 14 years and this has always been a problem," Mr. Murphy said.

The alley deterioration is getting worse due to increased traffic, according to Mr. Schill. About one block from his garage door, which faces the alley, is a medical transport business that uses the alley regularly, he added.

"And with people driving on our side even when they are going west, we're going to have an accident with people backing out of their garages," Mr. Schill said.

Residents do not want to take the responsibility of maintaining the other half of the alley because they are concerned about assuming liability, according to Mr. Schill. However, there is an option, according to Nicole Moon, Maricopa County Department of Transportation spokeswoman.

"The Association could

enter into a maintenance agreement with the entity that manages the other subdivision (if any) and/or the property owners adjacent to the alley," she stated in an email. "The terms of the agreement could include verbiage that limits liability."

Another option would be for the various associations adjoining the alley to take ownership of the other half.

"There would need to be a granting entity, which may be the original subdivider of the land and/or their successors," Ms. Moon stated. "A title agency could help the association ascertain the vesting owner of the land improved as the alley."

Maricopa County does not own the alley, and therefore has no responsibility for maintenance, according to Ms. Moon.

"The alleys have not been accepted into the county's transportation system, so therefore are not considered part of the county's roadway maintenance system," she stated.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

DESIGNATION

Quail Run retains environmental status

Audubon certification recognizes commitment

Quail Run Golf Course, 9774 W. Alabama Ave., has retained its designation as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, an Audubon International program.

Participation is designed to help course personnel plan, organize, implement and document a comprehensive environmental management program and receive recognition for their efforts. To reach certification, a course official must demonstrate they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas, including environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, outreach and education, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation and water quality management.

"Quail Run Golf Course has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program.

They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Christine Kane, Audubon International executive director.

Quail Run Golf Course is one of 19 courses in Arizona and 909 courses in the world to hold the honor. Golf courses from the United States, Africa, Australia, Central America, Europe, South America and Southeast Asia have also achieved certification in the program. Quail Run was designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2006. After designation, courses go through a recertification process every three years.

This year the recertification process, coordinated by Dennis Dulaney, course superintendent, required a visit by a local community representative. Kai Umeda, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension agent, was given a tour of the course and sent her observations to Audubon International.

"We see the site visit as an important component of a course's recertification," Ms.



Quail Run Golf Course, 9447 W. Alabama Ave., Superintendent Dennis Dulaney, left, and Head Starter Mike Schneider with the Audubon certificate retaining the course's status with the organization. [Submitted photo/Joelyn Higgins]

Kane said. "It provides an objective verification of some of the more visible aspects of the course's environmental management activities. In addition, it offers an opportunity

for golf course representatives to share publicly some of the voluntary actions they have taken to protect and sustain the land, water, wildlife and natural resources around

them."

Audubon International is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) environmental education organization dedicated to providing people with the education and

assistance they need to practice responsible management of land, water, wildlife and other natural resources.

Visit www.auduboninternational.org.

County is chopping down dozens of trees in Sun City

Dead, dying orange, palm trees facing saw

By Cecilia Chan

THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

Maricopa County is removing a number of dead or dying orange trees and cutting down about 35 palm trees in medians and rights of way for safety reasons in Sun City.

The county, which worked with the Sun City Prides to identify the problem trees, began the job last week. Prides is a volunteer group that plants, picks up litter and sprays for weeds in the retirement community.

"If (residents) know of additional trees that could pose a potential public-safety issue, please let us know," said Roberta Crowe, spokeswoman for the county Transportation Department. Most noticeable will be the removal of the gigantic palm trees long identified by many as Sun City icons.

Crowe said some of the palm trees have hollow areas making them unsafe to trim and at least one was hit by lightning. Some palm trees also are leaning over the roadway and creating potential traffic hazards.

Crowe said there are no immediate plans to replace the trees that are removed.

Paul Herrmann, executive director of the Sun City Visitors Center, wasn't surprised to learn that some of the orange trees have died and would be uprooted, considering they have a lifespan of about 50 years.

And, it's the orange trees, not the palm trees, Herrmann said, which were here when Del Webb debuted Sun City in 1960.

"They were lining the walls along Bell Road from the very beginning and were shorter than the walls," he said. "But they've grown up and died out."

From a historical standpoint, Herr-



MCDOT

Maricopa County is removing 35 palm trees in medians and rights of way for safety reasons in Sun City.

Tree removal in Sun City

Dead and dying orange trees will be removed at:

- » 107th Avenue south of Grand Avenue.
- » Alabama Avenue west of 99th Avenue.
- » Del Webb Boulevard south of Bell Road.

About 35 palm trees also will be removed for safety reasons.

Residents who know of other dead trees should notify the Maricopa County Department of Transportation dispatcher, 602-506-6063.

mann is sorry to see the orange trees disappear from Sun City. Herrmann is part of a committee formed to organize the community's 50th anniversary next year.

But, for practical reasons, the trees are costly in terms of upkeep and water use, said Herrmann, who instead would like to see desert landscaping replace the trees.

FAST TRASH

Garbage collectors rely on foot speed to get job done

JOY SLAGOWSKI
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sterling Skidmore of Glendale thought he was in good shape.

He had, after all, worked as a salesman at a gym where being fit was a job requirement.

And then he was hired as a garbage collector with Parks & Sons.

"It was two weeks before I could do this job," Skidmore, 22, said. "And it was another six months before I could do it well."

Parks & Sons services the Sun Cities, where residents' garbage is stored in cans underground in their front yards.

So garbage collectors like Skidmore go from home to home with a large plastic barrel on a dolly, emptying the cans from several homes before returning to the truck to unload.

Garbage collecting is not a leisurely stroll.

Collectors hit the ground running and race from home to home, stopping every few minutes to hoist 100-pound cans into the back of a garbage truck.

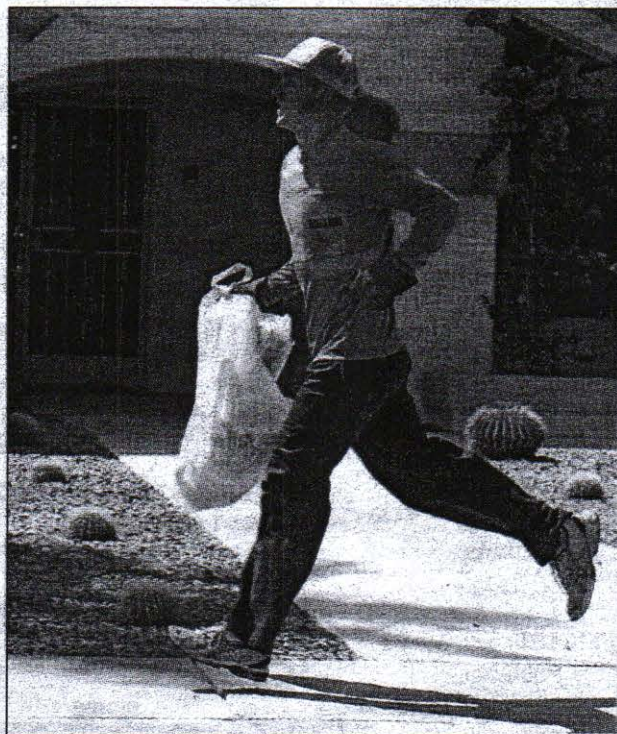
All that running adds up to 15 to 20 miles each day, Skidmore said. He mapped a route online to find out just how far he was running while servicing 500 homes daily.

It's a lot of physical work for a job that starts off paying about \$8 an hour.

Ryan Taylor, general manager, said the company doesn't have specific physical requirements other than the ability to lift more than 100 pounds on a repeated basis and to be able to be on your feet hours at a time.

"The underground cans aren't allowed to have more than 50 pounds in them, but a lot of cans are dumped into one barrel which is on a dolly as the collectors go from house to house," Taylor said.

The collectors work as a team, each one takes a side of the street and then meet at the truck every two to three houses and dump the garbage into the back of the truck where it compacts the gar-



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sterling Skidmore, 22, of Glendale runs between houses along a "super route" Thursday, collecting garbage for Parks and Sons in Sun City West. He says he typically runs 15 miles each day and on the days he works the super route, consisting of 500 homes, he runs more.

bage into the body of the truck. Drivers don't just drive, but also hop out at every stop to collect and help lift barrels into the back of the truck.

Taylor said it's not just a job for the young and nimble: there are some workers who have been with the company more than 30 years.

"But most of them are not running," Taylor said. "We have workers from 18 to in their 40s and 50s. They work very, very hard."

Taylor said there is one woman working as a collector who drives one of the trucks. But other women have held collector positions in the past as well.

Taylor said the company services "super routes" that are longer in length, where cream of the crop

SEE RUNNERS, A5



Log on to
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Visit yourwestvalley.com and watch Sterling Skidmore work his garbage route.

RUNNERS

FROM A1

employees work extra-hard for more pay.

Skidmore was working one of those Thursday in Sun City West, along with Demetri Vizcarra, 20, of Peoria and Joaquin Zermeno, 37, of Glendale.

Zermeno has been with Parks and Sons for about six months, and has two brothers who also work there who had prepped him for the physical demands.

So Zermeno trained for three months, running in the park, before he applied for the job.

"I knew it was going to be hard work," Zermeno said.

Zermeno said he wasn't really in shape before starting the job, and has lost 15 pounds from all of the running and lifting.

Coping with the heat is the biggest challenge, he said, as well as the aches and pains.

"You have to drink a lot of water," he said.

Zermeno said he doesn't do any other physical conditioning off-hours. But Skidmore said he recently joined a gym to support

his wife, who is pregnant and wanted to start working out.

He said he thought he was in shape before starting work as a garbage collector, but he's fit in a different way now.

He can't lift or bench press as much as he could before.

"But I have more muscle endurance now," Skidmore said.

Endurance is key in making it through the day and the seemingly endless amount of streets that need to be served.

"It seems like it never ends," he said. "And it feels good to get finished."



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Carole Studdard of Sun City donates her plastic materials for recycling in bins behind the Safeway store on 107th Avenue and Bell Road. The bins are operated by the Host Lions Club in Sun City.

Lions secure bins for recycling plastics

JEFF DEMPSEY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Carole Studdard moved to Sun City three years ago from her home near Richmond, Va., where there was a curbside recycling program.

When she moved to Sun City, the change was disappointing.

"I was confused at not seeing recycling bins in more places, and at how difficult it was to find the ones that were there," Studdard said. "But I was pleased when I found the bins, and I'm very pleased now to see they are accepting plastics."

After months of waiting, false starts and dashed hopes, Sun City residents can finally start recycling plastics. The Sun City Lions recycling program confirmed Tuesday they are accepting No. 1 and No. 2 plastics at their drop-off sites at 107th and Peoria Avenues and at 107th Avenue and Bell

RECYCLE

FROM A1

Road.

"We do have plastics recycling at those two sites," said Loretta Hieronymus, an office assistant at the Sun City Lions Recycling Association. "It's been fairly recently that we started accepting them, probably within the past month."

Due to the economic downturn, however, the Lions were unable to accept plastics. The market for recycled plastics had dipped to the point where they could not make enough money back to sustain the program.

But now, Hieronymus said, that is no longer the case.

"The market changes pretty quickly, so we were able to go ahead and put out the plastics bins," she said. "And, yes, Sun City residents should expect plastics recycling to be here to stay."

She added donors need to remember just what can and cannot be recycled. Examples of No. 1 and No. 2 plastics include: 2-liter soda bottles, peanut butter jars, milk jugs and detergent bottles. All plastics carry an identifying marker, numbering 1-7.

Garden Club sets record

By Rusty Bradshaw

The Sun City Garden Club had a record-setting year during its annual citrus drive.

During a seven-week period earlier this year garden club volunteers collected 460 bins of citrus fruit, totalling 230 tons. That topped the previous high of 446 bins and 223 tons in 2006, according to Pete Petersen, garden club president and 2009 citrus drive coordinator.

In addition to handling three drop-off locations at Bell Recreation Center, 16828 N. 99th Ave., Sundial Recreation Center, 14801 N. 103rd Ave., and the Sun Bowl, 10220 N. 107th Ave., garden club members formed a gleaning team and filled requests from 105 Sun City residents and gleaned 268 individual fruit trees, Mr. Petersen explained. There was so much work during this record-setting drive not all trees got attention.

"The garden club gleaning team is sorry we could not fulfill all the requests we received," Mr. Petersen said.

Picking fruit is not the only activity the club was busy with. One of their ongoing projects is providing cooling scarves for United States troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Club members donated their extended seventh week gleaning donations, totalling \$500, for the cooling scarves.

Cooling scarves are purchased at a cost of \$8 each. Anyone who wants to help the club with its cooling scarves project, through Soldier's Angels, can send check, made out to the Sun City Garden Club, to Garden Club,

FROM
The Editor

Rusty Bradshaw



10725 Oakmont Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351.

All fruit gleaned and dropped off during the citrus drive was donated to the St. Mary Food Bank Alliance. The club also supports Ronald McDonald House.

"We are thankful to everyone who participating (in the citrus drive) by bringing fruit to the drop off sites," Mr. Petersen said. "It was through your efforts the Citrus Drive 2009 achieved this record year."

Drive volunteers were also thanked for their work March 28 during a barbecue, featuring New York strip steaks, at Oakmont Recreation Center, 10725 W. Oakmont Drive. During the event Mr. Petersen thanked all those who gave their time to the citrus drive project.

The Sun City Garden Club meets 8:30 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month in the east auditorium at Sundial Recreation Center. Anyone interested in joining the club is encouraged to attend a meeting.

Call 623-875-5921.

News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.

Phase I improvements planned

SCHOA eyes median projects

By Matt Loeschman
Independent Newspapers

The once lush, green medians skirting the streets south of Grand Avenue in Phase I are now not so pleasant to see.

But that will soon change, according to Sun City Home Owners Association officials.

"We have a plan in place to

improve the medians basically one at a time," said Diane Crawford, a member of the SCHOA beautification committee. "It will be better than it was before. Right now, we are focused on the median on Alabama Avenue just east of 111th Avenue. I would think it would be finished within a month or so."

SCHOA is working in partnership with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation to convert several medians in Phase I, according to MCDOT spokes-

woman Roberta Crowe.

"This is a SCHOA program but we are assisting them with it," she explained. "It is definitely a work in progress but eventually, many of the medians will see improvements south of Grand."

One median near 107th and Peoria avenues was just refurbished and readjusted after motorists complained of various problems.

"There were issues of visibility," Ms. Crawford said. "Once it was done, an area of the berm

was too high and vegetation was impairing drivers' views. It has now been taken care of — I am sure many residents saw crews out there dealing with this problem."

The timeline of the improvement project spans nearly a decade.

In May 1998, MCDOT completed a candidate assessment report entitled "Sun City Median Landscaping and Potential Median Configurations." The report investigated several landscape reconfig-

uration scenarios and conversion alternatives. The report recommended a combinations grass/Sonoran desert median landscape reconfiguration.

But following a request from the SCHOA to re-visit this study and help them accomplish a water conservation program, MCDOT initiated additional efforts to investigate potential program funding scenarios or partnerships.

Maricopa County spends

See **Median** — Page 3

Median

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\$200,000 per year to water and maintain Sun City medians, Ms. Crowe noted. There are more than 220 miles of streets and medians in the community.

MCDOT first studied the water-saving median landscape conversion idea in 1991 and again revisited in 1998. Both times, cost/benefit analysis indicated it would be too costly to convert all the existing grass medians to a landscape requiring less water usage. But in 2002, SCHOA approached MCDOT with a plan to partner on one median as a "prototype" with the hope of generating donations from residents to supplement the cost of future median conversions.

Since then, the two entities have partnered several times.

The median to be improved near Alabama and 111th avenues is currently flat with no vegetation.

"The county has prepared that for the rock to be placed," Ms. Crawford explained. "SCHOA is currently deliberating what type of rock to use at that site. It will involved different types of rock, different sizes and different colors.

"As soon as the decision is made on the rocks, the county will go to work on it," she added. "This conversion is not as simple as you might think. We want to make sure

it is done right."

It is unknown whether trees will be planted on site.

Residents called the Independent noting the shabby nature of the median.

"We know it is time to freshen it up," Ms. Crawford said. "It is just like your house — you have to redecorate as time goes by."

Ms. Crawford said the home owners association and MCDOT will

share the median improvement cost.

"It is a combination cost," she said. "The materials will cost SCHOA money."

The beautification committee member could not speculate on how much it will cost SCHOA to refurbish the median.

"Luckily for us, the county labor is free," Ms. Crawford said. "And MCDOT has been terrific to work with on this."

Once the rocks are down, other improvements will commence, she added.

"And when we near the end of this median, we'll determine where we will go next," Ms. Crawford explained. "We have found it is best to work on these one at a time."

Resident Ed Jovensky hopes to see improvements soon.

"Let's face it, it looks pretty bad right now," he said. "It's just plain and flat. These are part of our community and they should look well-groomed."

Ms. Crowe said residents should exercise patience during the improvement process.

"It's a work in progress," she said. "It won't bother traffic much at all. And once it is complete, it will make a big difference in the aesthetics of the area."

Post your comments on this issue at www.newszapforums.com/forum29.

Reach News Editor Matt Loeschman at

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mloeschman@newszap.com.

County gives community air device

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun Cities area air-quality study may have charted only one pollution violation, but county officials say its enough to place a permanent monitor in the area.

Ben Davis, air-monitoring manager with the Maricopa County Air Quality Department, said the department aims to install a permanent, continuous air monitor in the area of Beardsley Road and 111th Avenue in Peoria, along the Agua Fria River bed, by mid-to-late 2006.

Davis and nearly a dozen other Maricopa County Air Quality Department staff members were at

Lakeview Recreation Center in Sun City Wednesday to explain the results of the six-month Sun Cities area air-quality study during a public town hall. About 40 Sun Cities and Peoria residents attended the meeting, including representatives of PORA and the Sun City Home Owners Association.

Bob Kard, director of the county Air Quality Department, assured those who attended that the county will continue to monitor the air and enforce air-quality regulations.

"Air is our most vital natural resource," he said. "What came out of that report is that we want to continue permanently monitoring."

The results of Sun City's

six-month air-quality study were announced this month, and the survey found there are no exceptional air-quality issues in the area. The study period lasted from November 2004 to May with one study monitor continuing to collect data through Aug. 11. The study included six air-monitoring stations located in the vicinity of sand and gravel operations, concrete batch operations and asphalt plants along the Agua Fria riverbed.

However, Davis said a more long-term study is in order. The recently concluded study was conducted during the West Valley's rainiest

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8 VER

MONITOR: Sun City HOA unsatisfied with study

From A1

winter in years, possibly eliminating some pollution problems that may have otherwise been in the air, he said. A permanent study would sample air throughout the year, and would hopefully track average annual pollution readings.

Marge Murphy, chair of the HOA's environmental committee, doesn't believe that the six-month study only picked up one pollution violation, rain or shine.

"We're not satisfied that there were exceedances only on one day of the six months," she said Tuesday during an HOA board meeting. "I hope we'll get more answers."

After the town hall, she still wasn't convinced, but was encouraged by the county's future plans.

"It went very well, it was very informative, but not too much was resolved," she said. "But it's good to be able to ask questions. I'm looking forward to the permanent site, it sounds like they're really serious about it."

Local environmental activist Shirley McDonald of Sun City West did her own research using data from the study and other county data. She alleged that there were some inconsistencies in the readings of the six monitors.

Steve Mauch, a representative Weston Solutions, the company contracted by

the county to do the study, said the readings weren't inconsistent. He said the data may have appeared different because it was collected through the different monitoring methods.

County representatives promised McDonald and Murphy that they would investigate their questions in depth and get back to them with answers.

There were six monitoring stations, some monitored around the clock and others picked up periodic samples, Mauch said. Some monitors collected data on dust, others collected data on components of asphalt or oils.

The monitors were located in the vicinity of sand and gravel operations — Zuni School at 107th Avenue and Williams Road in Peoria; Coyote Lakes neighborhood off Bell Road, south of Dysart Road; a site just northwest of Coyote Lakes called the "Ranch Site"; Cameo Drive in Sun City; Thompson Ranch School in El Mirage; and one on Mountain View Road in Sun City. Both Sun City sites were in back yards of resident volunteers.

The Ranch Site monitor station is the only one that recorded an unlawful level of pollutants, Mauch said. But the exceedance is attributed to high winds, not to any of the sand-and-gravel mining operations along the Agua Fria riverbed, he added.

The study focused on measuring air pollutants such as particulate matter (dust) and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, which are typical components of asphalts, fuels, oils and greases. Particulate matter was measured for particles less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10) and particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5). These size particles can lodge deep in a person's lungs, causing respiratory problems.

Carolou Anderson of Sun City had one of the monitors in the back yard of her home on Cameo Drive and Agua Fria Drive. She attended the town hall meeting to learn more about what her backyard monitor collected. She said that question remains to be answered.

Her back yard shares a wall with the outer limits of Vulcan Mines, and she blames the mine for the dirt and dust in her house. She also said that a tree she planted four years ago has flourished on the side that faces the house, but has never grown on the side that faces the mine. What has managed to grow, she said, has deteriorated and died away. Kard said there isn't enough evidence known to prove that Vulcan mine is to blame for the damaged tree.

Marge Mead of Sun City said she was impressed

with the number of air quality department staff members that attended the town hall. She said there is still much work to be done.

"The air is dirty all over the county, especially over here," said Mead, who lives near a mine in the Agua Fria riverbed. After wiping down her patio tables one evening, she was surprised to see a new layer of dust had settled by the next morning. "It's knowing the air is so dirty that bothers me. If you can see it, you shouldn't have to breathe it."

"We can put men on the moon, but we can't stop dust?" she questioned.

Kard said he is a fan of employing the latest technologies to monitor air quality. The problem, he said, is finding the funding. In about two years, he hopes to have some new air monitoring and enforcement programs established in the county.

"It needs to be done with Arizona lacking hazardous pollutants laws. We need to have an idea what's out there," he said.

Copies of the air quality report may be requested through the Maricopa County Air Quality Department's Records Management Coordinator at 602-506-6201.

For information on the Maricopa County Air Quality Department, visit www.maricopa.gov/airq.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

Saturday, Feb 26, 2005

SC Rec board approves construction of cell tower

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

An AT&T/Cingular wireless cell phone tower disguised as a palm tree was approved by the Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors.

In early January, representatives from AT&T/Cingular approached the Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors, requesting approximately 12 feet of open space on the outskirts of the Sun Bowl Amphitheater's property to erect the tower.

At Thursday's regular RCSC board meeting, Ken Fold, director and chairman of the Properties Committee, moved that RCSC management be authorized to proceed with negotiations for the installation of the unmanned wireless communication tower on the Sun Bowl property.

The vote passed unanimously.

Should negotiations be successful, the

tower will be erected between the Sun Bowl parking lot and the Sun Bowl Plaza shopping center, west of 107th Avenue and south of Peoria Avenue.

Fold and members of his committee went door-to-door twice last month and sent a letter, asking Sun Bowl's neighboring residents if they had any objections to a communication tower nearby. On Feb. 2, AT&T/Cingular representatives met with residents to answer questions. Response from residents was positive overall, Fold said.

AT&T/Cingular will pay an undetermined fee to the RCSC corporation to rent the cell phone tower's space. A monopole near Marquette Recreation Center brings in rent fees of about \$800 per month, so the Sun Bowl tower could bring in a similar amount, Fold said in an earlier interview.

Annie Boon may be reached at 876-2532 or aboone@aztrib.com.

HOA beautification committee eyes future median improvements

ERIN REEP
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Home Owners Association Foundation has received \$1,000 in donations toward the beautification of a median in Sun City.

The announcement came Thursday afternoon at a meeting of the HOA beautification committee attended by representatives of the HOA board, Sun City PRIDES and Maricopa County Department of Transportation.

The committee discussed ideas for further beautification of medians in Phase 1 and how memorial bricks will be designed and installed in the recently completed median at 107th and Abbott avenues. Gerry Unger, a HOA adviser who helped spearhead the project, showed the committee illustrated concepts of two patterns for laying the bricks.

One included arranging them in rectangular or square patterns leading up to a memorial bench. The second was to create about a 6-by-20 rectangle with "Sun City" spelled out.

"My thought was to make some sort of centralized memorial," he said, adding it could be located near the south end of the median, beside a crosswalk for golf cars and pedestrians.

The committee discussed how the median has been used, including frequent use by dog owners.

Committee members brainstormed future possibilities for median renovations. Unger said there are about 51 medians in Phase 1, south of Grand Avenue. Not all of them would be candidates for renovation, he said.

The committee consulted with MCDOT representatives Brenda Zambelli, governmental liaison, and Frank Urquiza, public-works supervisor, about how the HOA should petition for further help converting medians to xeriscaping. Urquiza suggested that the HOA canvass residents living in the area about what changes or improvements they would like to see.

MCDOT paid the \$150,000

cost of the median renovation on 107th, which converted the median to xeriscaping, and used rocks, plants, shrubbery and trees, and freshly laid Bobsod to make the median more attractive and drought-friendly. The project, a collaborative effort between the HOA and MCDOT, cuts water use on the median in half.

In addition, the HOA has established a foundation through which residents can make tax-exempt donations

toward it and future median projects. For a \$100 donation, residents have a brick engraved as they choose placed in the median.

Urquiza and Zambelli said MCDOT's budget was just completed for July, and there are no new funds set aside for further Sun City median-beautification projects in the next year.

Discussion followed among committee members over who should be surveyed — all Phase 1 residents or just

those who live in the area of targeted medians.

HOA President Floyd Brown was absent from the meeting. In his place, Murphy made the suggestion that the next median renovated should be the one just north of the recently finished project, so it could be used as a model for future medians.

Unger said the committee should develop ideas for five different designs, with various levels of rock and grass usage.

Urquiza said conducting a survey would benefit the HOA in requesting MCDOT funding for future projects.

"Usually having a survey, a petition, or anything of that sort will be to your favor," he said.

Lanny Brent, a homeowner who lives on Alabama Avenue near 99th, said he attended the meeting because he doesn't want to see future medians converted to all rock landscaping.

"This is why I bought on

Alabama," he said.

Brent said he is from Minnesota and enjoys seeing grass and trees.

"This affects our property values," he said.

Committee members agreed to develop a plan for a possible survey of residents and dog owners who live near the medians and use them for pets.

Erin Reep can be reached at 876-2532 or ereep@aztrib.com.

Eco-friendly

Sun City median dedicated in pilot project for county, HOA

ERIN REEP
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson stood on the bright green grass, pouring a drop of water from a small plastic bottle.

The drop fell to the ground, symbolically watering earth on a newly renovated median at 107th and Abbott avenues in Sun City.

"I want that to be the drop that's heard

See SUN CITY, A5



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson addresses a crowd at the dedication ceremony for the beautification of the median on 107th Avenue north of Peoria Avenue in Sun City Tuesday. The \$150,000 project is expected to reduce irrigation costs by 50 percent.



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Home Owners Association and Maricopa County Department of Transportation worked together to produce an eco-friendly median on 107th Avenue north of Peoria Avenue.

OVER

From A1

around Maricopa County," said Wilson with a smile.

Wilson led the dedication ceremony at 8 a.m. Tuesday on the beautified median, the result of a partnership between the Maricopa County Department of Transportation and the Sun City Home Owners Association.

MCDOT paid the \$150,000 cost of the project, and the HOA has established a foundation through which residents can make tax-exempt donations toward it and future median projects.

More than 50 people gathered for the ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony. Sun City residents, HOA board members, PRIDES volunteers and Maricopa County officials munched on cookies and sipped iced tea at a reception in the Fairway Recreation Center music room afterward.

The HOA and MCDOT worked together on the project that uses xeriscaping, rocks, plants, shrubbery and trees, and freshly laid Bobsod — the brand of sod used at Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix.

Gerry Unger, an adviser to the HOA board, spearheaded efforts to renovate the median. Patches of barren grass and 2- to 3-foot wide piles of dirt once lined the median, which is now relandscaped and has essentially become a park.

"I was very flattered to be out there and to see Max Wilson save a glass of water," Unger said during the reception.

MCDOT conducted studies in 1991 and 1998 on how to



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson holds bricks commemorating the beautification project in the median on 107th Avenue north of Peoria Avenue in Sun City Tuesday.

upgrade medians in a way that would conserve water and be cost-effective, said Scott Isham, chief of staff for Wilson. The renovation project included installation of a new sprinkler system — changing the flood irrigation to bubble sprinklers — which is solar powered.

"It's very eco-friendly," Isham said. The project will cut in half the median's water use.

Those attending the ceremony said they were impressed with the look of the median.

"I think it's very well done," said Sun City PRIDES member Cara Lee Jungmeyer. She said people and their pets will probably use the median as a park.

"I think it's lovely; I think it's a nice compromise," said PRIDES member Edith

Christiansen — adding that the median nicely mixes desert landscaping and sod.

Now residents can walk their dogs in the area and enjoy it, she said.

"When you get (to be) our age, pets are very important."

"The grass is such a beautiful shade of green," said PRIDES member Dorothy Hulett.

Jim Corcoran, HOA first vice president, said the board is pleased with the median: "It's something that needed to be done."

"I think it's great for Sun City," said Corcoran's wife Annie, part of the Sun City Environmental Association. "I think this is one step in the right direction."

The renovation was the pilot project for the county and the HOA, said HOA board President Floyd Brown.

There are plans for four to five more median renovation projects, with various possibilities in design and scope.

"It's a long-term project, and we realize that," Brown said. "We ask for the county's help and the community's help."

Unger said "other designs" are in the works for the community's medians, which will also conserve water and power.

"This was an experiment on developing a theme, a system, and it's an example — a good example," Unger said. Hopefully the county can find continued ways to renovate medians in a way that is "bigger, better and cheaper," he said.

Residents are invited to donate toward the project in honor of loved ones. HOA beautification committee Chairwoman Marge Murphy said donations can be made to help fund trees, shrubbery and the possibility of adding benches to the park. In return for a \$100 donation or more, residents receive a brick engraved with the names of loved ones to be placed in the park at a later date. Wilson donated the first two bricks on Tuesday morning to representatives of the HOA and the Sun City PRIDES.

The HOA envisions benches at either end of the median, near areas overlaid with the bricks, Murphy said.

To donate toward the renovation project through the HOA Foundation, a 501(c)3 corporation, call the HOA at 974-4718.

Erin Reep can be reached at 876-2532 or ereep@aztrib.com.

Proposed bus-lot opponents form coalition

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: Mission is to raise awareness, petition Peoria officials

ERIN REEP
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A small coalition of community residents met Thursday night to plan action to prevent a proposed school-bus facility from being built on 91st Avenue north of Bell Road in Peoria.

About 18 people, representing residents from Sun City and the Peoria communities of Desert Harbor, Westbrook Village, Brookside, Hunter's Ridge, and the Amethyst and Encore Senior Village retirement centers participated in the meeting held at Encore.

The group has chosen the name "Neighbors Helping Neighbors," said co-organizer Charlene Jennings, a Sun City homeowner whose property abuts the proposed site: "That's what we are — neighbors helping neighbors."

Jennings and her husband, Don, are part of the group of concerned residents who have been meeting to figure out how to stop the bus lot from being built.

Kayleen Dawe, another of the group's leaders, said, "I feel that we are continuing to come together."

Dawe's family lives in Brookside, and their property also abuts the proposed site.

"There are so many avenues we are looking at taking," she said.

Those at Thursday's meeting divided into three groups to work on

publicity, study traffic and zoning surveys, and maintain contact with the Peoria Unified School District board. A leader for each group was selected and will oversee various subcommittees.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors maintains contact with members through e-mail and phone calls, Jennings said.

The proposed lot would be built by PUSD on 20 acres just north of Bell Road near Sun City's eastern border.

"The original plans call for 60 to 65 buses to be parked at the transportation yard," said Jim Cummings, public-relations director for the school district.

The district currently owns 186 buses, and they could all potentially be parked at the lot, Cummings said. The lot would operate from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, with some evening and Saturday usage for extracurricular activities, said Steve Highlen, administrator for support services for PUSD.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors aims to petition the school board, City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and other officials not to build the facility on the site selected, and to inform local residents about what's happening, Dawe said.

"We are gathering information to present to the school board and to

the Planning and Zoning Commission when we have the hearing for the zoning," she said.

Eventually, the group hopes the Peoria City Council will address the issue, Dawe said.

Cummings said the district has done what it can to respond to residents' concerns.

"First off, we did hold a public meeting in March," he said, adding that district officials also met with some of the leaders of Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

Additionally, the school district has agreed to conduct traffic and air-quality studies to learn about the potential effects of the bus lot, Cummings said. Building will not proceed until the results of those studies are received, he said. The school district purchased the land for \$1.2 million.

The district has submitted architectural and engineering plans to the Planning and Zoning Commission, said City Planner Tim Loughrin: "Right now we've done one review. I gave it back with comments in early March and it hasn't been resubmitted."

Typically, a plan will undergo anywhere from two to four reviews before going to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Loughrin said. With the first review, planning and zoning commissioners asked the district to do "more mitigation, more landscaping and things like that," Loughrin said. Planning and zoning has also asked for additional walls

See PUSD, A5

From A1

and landscape buffers, he said.

Once the plan has cleared the review process, the Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a hearing, Loughrin said. An appeal from area residents could send the matter to the City Council, he said, which is Neighbors Helping Neighbors' goal.

Dawe said she believes potential health hazards from the buses' exhaust could include increasing the danger of heart attacks and asthma problems. She is also concerned for her children; her oldest child rides a bicycle to Apache Elementary School each day, she said.

"We have a neighborhood full of children," she said. "To get to school, they have to

cross 91st Avenue. They're disrupting people's lives to choose this site."

Dawe said Neighbors Helping Neighbors is making the public aware of the proposed lot. The group believes the school district made plans quietly without public awareness, she said.

"The site they've chosen for the facility affects a large group of people, and half of them don't even know about it," Dawe said.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors has not set a date for its next meeting, but will likely meet within two weeks. For information, call Dick Viviani at 974-6975, Bill Klink at 974-1600 or Kayleen Dawe at 583-7721.

Erin Reep can be reached at 876-2532 or ereep@aztrib.com

April 23, 2003

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

Median conversion continues

By Mike Russo

Independent Newspapers

Leaders of the Sun City Home Owners Association are hoping residents are going to be so pleased with the results of a pilot project to convert a Phase I median to desert landscaping that a public clamor will occur for additional conversions.

"Everyone who sees that (median) will say they won't mind having that in their front yard," predicted Gerry Unger, a member of the HOA beautification committee.

The Maricopa County Department of Transportation has begun transforming the median on 107th Avenue, between Abbott and El Dorado drives, from a grassed area to predominantly xeriscaping.

A strip of serpentine-shaped grass will run almost the entire length of the median.

The project, which is designed to conserve water, save money and approve the aesthetics of the area, is expected to reduce water consumption on the median by about 50 percent, according to Frank Urquiza, MCDOT public works supervisor.

Water conservation will be in part by the installation of more efficient watering systems. A sprinkler system will be installed for the grass, and a drip watering system will be installed for the flora.

Maricopa County spends approximately \$200,000 annually watering all the medians in Sun City, according to

Mr. Urquiza.

All the decorative citrus trees and grass have been removed from the pilot-project median.

"They are shaping the dirt for the landscaping contours," Mr. Urquiza said. "Once that is done, they pour curbing to separate the rock from the grass."

Planting of trees, installation of the turf and putting down the rock will be the final steps, Mr. Urquiza noted.

He expects the project to be done by the first or second week in May.

The original project budget was \$50,000.

HOA is trying to soften the economic blow to the county by soliciting donations to purchase trees and shrubs for the median.

"People have called and offered donations," said Marge Murphy, beautification committee chairperson.

Mr. Unger said HOA is urging residents to donate money to purchase flora in memory of a loved one.

Trees cost approximately \$85 to \$100 each, according to Mr. Urquiza. Twenty-six trees are planned for the median.

Gary Lasham of MCDOT has suggested placing a bench on the median, with the cement, rock or brick used to anchor the bench displaying the names of donors.

Lanny Brent, a 9-year resident of Alabama Avenue, thinks the bench would be a good idea.

"Every day I see people



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

Maricopa County Department of Transportation employees continue grading work on the county's median pilot project. Completion of the project is expected during the first or second week of May.

walking their dogs in the median and visiting; the bench is a good idea," remarked Mr. Brent, a former opponent of the project who now supports the project.

"I kind of accepted it will be changed," Mr. Brent said. "I hope everyone adjusts to it. I will recommend everyone on my block support the project."

While HOA officials are hopeful more medians can eventually be converted, Mr. Lasham said MCDOT has no plans to do any more medians immediately.

In order for the county to

convert more medians, funds would have to be available in the capital projects budget, according to Mr. Lasham.

"This is a pilot project to see if we can generate interest out here," he said.

A groundswell of support from the residents may convince the county to proceed with future conversions when funding is available, he noted.

"Maybe, if the pilot project turns out well, HOA can start a grass roots effort to do other medians," offered Brenda Zambelli, MCDOT project supervisor.

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SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2003

Sun City residents fight Peoria

Enraged by plans for school bus yard

By Maggie Galehouse
The Arizona Republic

PEORIA — It was standing room only one night this week as Peoria and Sun City residents continued to protest a school bus yard the Peoria Unified School District plans to build on the west side of 91st Avenue north of Bell Road.

By the end of the two-hour meeting, residents had planned a picket for 1 p.m. today at 91st Avenue and Bell Road.

Since learning about the bus site last month, nearby residents have been meeting regularly in the hope that the school district would put the yard in another site. Their concerns include air and noise pollution and decreased property values.

"A school district should not have this kind of power to affect our lives," said Kayleen Dawe, a Peoria resident spearheading the protests.

The 20-acre bus yard is designed to hold 180 to 200 school buses. Many parents are worried about added traffic on 91st Avenue and runoff onto 87th and 89th avenues.

"The kids who live near the bus yard walk to Apache Elementary," said Keith Ferris, whose two children will attend the school at 87th Avenue and West John Cabot Road next year. "If one child dies, the cost is too high. Let's not increase the odds."

Dawe urged about 50 people assembled Wednesday night at Encore Senior Village to send e-mails to the school district's five governing board members. Many at the meeting had T-shirts saying, "No Buses on 91st Ave. & Bell Rd., STOP the Peoria Unified School District."

"I want them to know we are not going away," Dawe said. The group also has set up its own Web site, www.peoria

suncitynobuses.org.

Residents also want to voice their concerns at a school board meeting. To do that, they must get on the governing board's agenda. Board members are not required by law to hear residents' concerns in a board meeting. They are compelled only to respond to what is on the agenda, and it is the board and the superintendent who set the agenda.

But governing board President Debra Raeder said the issue will be put on the agenda after board members have a chance to review a traffic study and an air quality study they have requested.

"Let's get some facts," Raeder said. "If we just allow these people to come and speak, it will be emotional. The board has to be able to deal beyond the emotional piece. Once we commission the studies, it will be on the agenda."

Contact the reporter at maggie.galehouse@arizona republic.com or (602) 444-6919.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT May 14, 2003

Anti-bus yard group uses pickets, T-shirts

By Erik Burg
Independent Newspapers

Picketing the site of a proposed bus transportation facility on the Sun City/Peoria border and showing up en masse at City Hall meetings wearing matching T-shirts are two of the ways members of the Peoria-Sun City No Buses Coalition have chosen to get their message out.

"This is going to be a big fight," said Kayleen Dawe, the coalition's spokeswoman said at a meeting last week to plot strategy for battling the Peoria Unified School District's plan for a bus yard at Bell Road and 91st Avenue. "They're not going to go down easy."

The coalition scheduled the first picket for May 10 and planned a repeat performance at 1 p.m. May 17.

While the group is continuing to fight to have the issue placed on a PUSD board agenda, members also plan on attending Peoria Planning and Zoning Committee and City Council meetings in numbers, wearing T-shirts promoting their cause.

The shirts are sold for \$6 a piece to raise funds for the coalition.

"We want our presence to be known," Ms. Dawe said. "I want them to know our faces, our shirts. ... We want everyone to know who we are."

"We want them to know we're here and we're not going away," added her husband, Richard Dawe, in an interview.

Ms. Dawe sent a registered letter April 29 to the PUSD

See **Buses** — Page 7



Photo by Erik Burg/
Independent Newspapers

Kayleen Dawe, spokeswoman for the Peoria-Sun City No Buses Coalition, speaks at the group's meeting last week.

Buses

Continued From Page 1
school board requesting the matter be placed on the agenda.

In response, the district told her the board would not be addressing the issue until results from traffic and pollution studies on the bus yard were complete.

"We have statistics from studies that have already been done," Ms. Dawe said, citing information she has gathered from sources such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the American Lung Association.

"We think we should be able to present our case before they get the results."

Debra Raeder, PUSD board president, countered that the commissioned studies are specific to the proposed site, whereas the information gathered by the group from such sources as the Internet is not precise enough on which to base a decision.

"If everything they say is true, it should be validated by the official study," Ms. Raeder said in an interview. "We will have some scientific, not emotional, information to go on."

Ms. Raeder acknowledged the tests should have been conducted before a vote was taken approving it in 2001.

PUSD superintendent Dr. Jack Erb said the traffic and air quality studies will be conducted at the district's other bus yard sites. In addition, a

Realtor will research home values in the area, to determine if they already have declined on news of the planned bus yard.

The Realtor will also re-investigate the possibility of choosing one of the four or five other parcels of land originally considered by the district before the Bell Road and 91st Avenue site was selected.

"I'm just not sure if there are very many acres of land that are zoned industrial," Dr. Erb said.

He added that if the board was to consider another site which turned out to be more costly, that would pose another problem.

"Someone would have to absorb those costs," Dr. Erb said. "The district is not going to."



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dick and Barbara Schiefelbein of Sun City attend a meeting Thursday night of residents concerned about a school-bus parking lot proposed for a site in Peoria adjacent to their property.

Challenge gains steam against proposed school-bus parking lot

NEIGHBORS UNITE: Sun Citians, Peorians don't want fleet near them

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Peoria and Sun City neighbors started organizing Thursday night to fight a proposed school-bus lot on land abutting their properties.

Names were taken, tasks outlined and goals defined in the meeting that attracted about 50 people concerned about Peoria Unified School District's plans to build a school-bus parking lot and maintenance facility on 20 acres at the west side of 91st Avenue just north of Bell Road.

Both Sun City and Peoria homes abut the property, so seniors and young families are forging a cooperative spirit to stop Peoria Planning and Zoning Commission from approving a conditional-use permit for the bus lot. The meeting at which that permit could be considered is expected to be held in one to two months.

"Think about you people from Peoria being the front people in all of this," said Bill Klink of Sun City. "Then you can get backup from us old people. If we go down as Sun City residents, the first thing they're going to say is, 'You don't pay school taxes.'"

Klink said Sun Citians do pay some school taxes, but other municipalities sometimes dismiss their requests because most parts of the age-restricted communities aren't in school districts.

The neighbors considered finding a name for their group, from the Dirty Bomb Squad to Concerned Citizens Against Bus Site, but the gist of the meeting was to explain the problem to newcomers, collect volunteers' names and start assigning tasks.

Talia Offord, an air-quality specialist with Maricopa County, told residents the diesel fuel used by many Peoria Unified School District buses is a health hazard, particularly if buses idle for significant periods.

"Would breathing that affect my health?" Klink asked.

"I can just give you the facts," Offord said. "These health effects have been proven."

Offord said she didn't think the city or school district understood the problems associated with diesel fuel, which produces carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, formaldehyde, nitrogen oxide and other pollutants.

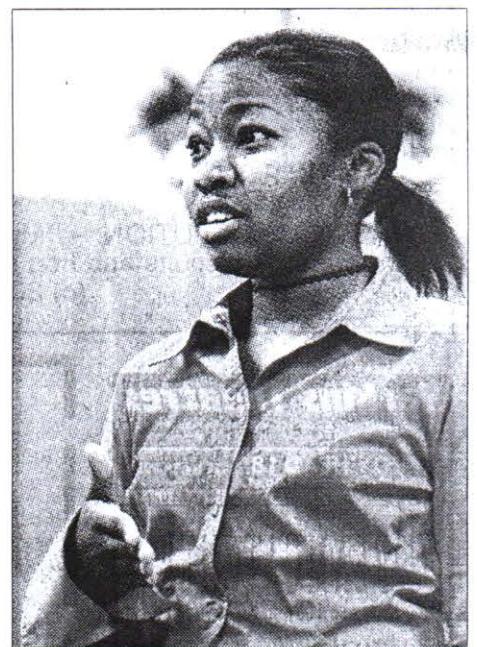
"These sites should not be put up next to senior citizen sites, nursing sites or homes," Offord said.

The proposed site is across the street from two assisted-living facilities, including Encore Senior Village, which serves people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Offord said one tool residents should be aware of is Maricopa County's relatively new Vehicle Idling Restriction Ordinance, which prohibits large diesel vehicles such as school buses from idling for more than five minutes.

Violators can be fined \$100 for the first citation and \$300 for additional citations.

The challenge, she said, is convincing



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Talia Offord, an air-quality specialist with Maricopa County, tells residents concerned about a school-bus parking lot in their neighborhood that the diesel fuel used by many Peoria Unified School District buses is a health hazard, particularly if buses idle for significant periods.

local police agencies to make this ordinance a priority.

"Since this is new, the energy they're putting toward this ordinance is education and awareness," she said.

"If this did go through, God help them

See CHALLENGE, A5

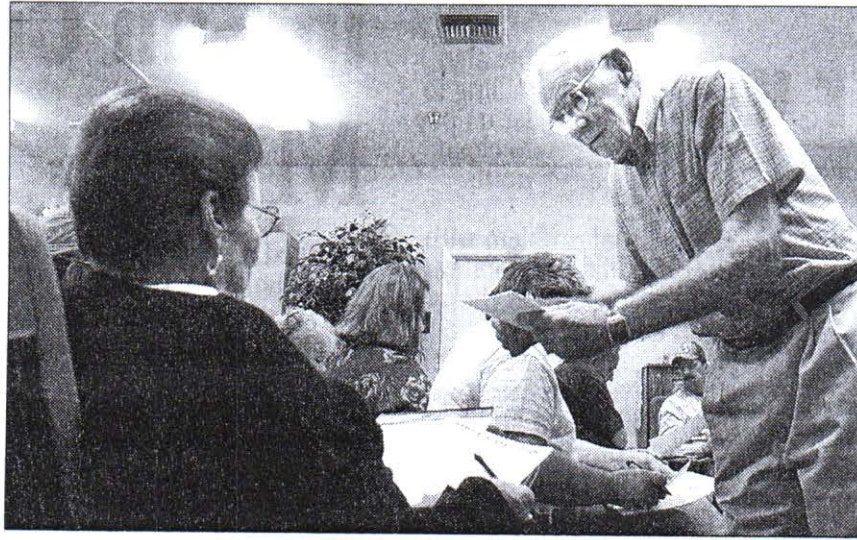
From A1

if it did, but I don't think it will, can you imagine how many calls they'd get?" asked Dick Viviani, one of the organizers. At \$300 per repeat violation, he said, the district ought to reconsider the location for financial reasons.

Kayleen Dawe of Peoria, another organizer, said the group needed to focus not just on pollution but the increased traffic, home values and other problems the group believes the lot will bring.

Dawe said the group also needs to widen its circle of influence in order to ensure enough residents attend the Peoria Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to speak out against the permit.

"We just need to spread the word, further and further because they don't have to spread the word. The city and school district don't need to tell anyone what they're doing other than the letter they've sent to people within 300



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Bill Klink hands out information Thursday at a meeting of residents concerned about a school-bus parking lot proposed near their homes.

feet," she said.

John Beasley said he recently moved to Peoria from Hawaii and is dismayed to see the district trying to locate the bus lot near his home. If the timing had been reversed, he said, the homes would never have been allowed near the bus lot.

"If this same thing was in

this area, they would not approve those houses being built," he said.

Organizers are looking to find another location for their next meeting because Thursday's crowd spilled into the hallway at Encore's meeting room. The date and location of the next meeting have not been determined.

For information about the group, call Kayleen Dawe at 583-7721. For information about Maricopa County's idling ordinance, visit the Web site www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/RULES/idling.asp; call the county at 602-506-0169; or visit the EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/otaq/retrofit/idling.htm.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

March 26, 2003

Residents to fight bus yard plan

By **Diana Shaughnessy**
Independent Newspapers

Tempers flared and people stood to shout their objections at a Peoria Unified School District public meeting March 19 concerning a proposed school district transportation center near angry Peoria and Sun City residents' homes.

Although the meeting was originally designed as informational in nature, to inform people about plans for a trans-

portation center on 91st Avenue north of Bell Road, it led to the loose organization of an effort to block the PUSD from building the facility.

"We need to unite and go to Peoria planning and zoning meetings to let them know how we feel," said Sun City resident Bill Klink said, quieting the Sun City and Peoria residents' objections by uniting them in a common goal "We can fight this if we stick together."

According to Tim Loughrin,

city of Peoria project manager for the PUSD transportation center, PUSD's original site plan was not "up to code," so the district will have to resubmit it.

"At that time, letters from residents and speakers addressing the issue will be considered before we issue any permits," Mr. Loughrin said.

At present, no building permits for the project have been issued by the city of Peoria.

Although last week's meet-

ing began calmly with PUSD Administrator for Support Services Steve Highland giving a brief history of district transportation needs, the meeting quickly got out of control.

Residents shouted about traffic concerns, pollution and hours of operation, while Mr. Highland tried to maintain order.

Under the plan, the 20-acre site would house a maintenance building, office building, underground fuel storage sup-

ply and sub-surface tanks, and parking for more than 200 buses and 30 fleet vehicles.

Residents expressed concern about the lack of information distributed prior to the meeting. Many found out about the March 19 meeting through a flier produced by Sun City residents Don and Charlene Jennings.

Mr. Jennings said he only knew about the meeting him-

See **Bus** — Page B3

OVER

Bus

Continued From Page 1

self because he learned about it from a newspaper reporter whom he called to discuss the transportation-yard issue.

Mr. and Mrs. Jennings distributed their fliers, which included maps of the proposed transportation center, to residents near the proposed yard. They include Sun City residents living along Country Club Drive north of Bell Road and residents in Peoria's Brookside Village along West St. John Road, West Grovers Avenue, North 91st Lane and North 92nd Lane.

According to Mr. Highland, construction would be done in phases, with concrete paving on the eastern section completed as Phase One. An entrance on 91st Avenue, located on the southern section of the property to be built by the district, would handle initial bus traffic. Additional entrances on 91st Avenue and Bell Road are planned.

Mr. Highland said the district plans to have Phase One completed by August 2003. About 60 buses currently stored at Sunrise Mountain High School and a leased facility on Acoma Drive would be moved to the new facility.

Kayleen Dawe, who lives on St. John Road, was one of the most vocal opponents of the project.

"When I purchased my home, which backed up to a vacant lot, I knew I was gambling," she said. "I expected a grocery store or a restaurant or a car dealership. I never expected a school transportation center."



From the northeast corner of the proposed transportation yard, both the Sun City, left, and Brookside Village property walls are visible.

She cited pollution, noise and traffic as major issues.

"I know from the past what a dust storm is like in my back yard," Ms. Dawe said. "It will be worse with buses warming up, getting ready to go out on their runs. And the noise — my husband works at night and our bedroom window faces the future transportation center.

"As far as the traffic goes, this neighborhood only had two entrances. That was a plus when I bought my home, but now it is detrimental."

Ms. Dawe noted that she would have to disclose future property plans if she tried to sell her home. "But the district did not disclose their plans when they purchased the property," she said.

Two portable units stored on the property led Ms. Dawe to discover that PUSD owns

the land and plans to create a transportation center.

"My neighbor and I called the police when children started playing around the portables," she said. "Another neighbor, a district teacher, told me about the bus yard plans."

Ms. Dawe said she received a letter from the city of Peoria Feb. 21, stating that the city received an application for design approval. A small map was included with her letter.

Residents within 300 feet of a property must be notified any time development plans are submitted, Mr. Loughrin explained.

"Plans are reviewed by the planning and zoning committee 6:30 p.m. every first and third Thursday of the month," Mr. Loughrin added. "We also post information on the property, when it will be reviewed

by the committee."

Debra Stark, community development director for the city of Peoria, said the unification of residents also would be helpful when it comes to determining what measures to take to mitigate adverse impact on residents.

"PUSD has an excellent working relationship with the city," she said. "The district works hard to be a good neighbor to adjacent residents and businesses. Residents who live close to the proposed transportation yard may be able to get compromises."

February 26, 2003

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

Environmental group plans 1st meeting

Noise, air problems from mines on agenda

By **Mike Russo**
Independent Newspapers

The newly formed Sun City Environmental Association will hold its first meeting at 2:30 p.m. Feb. 27 at Menke Funeral Home, 12420 W. 103rd Ave., Sun City.

The organization recently was formed to focus on the environmental impacts of mining operations in and around the Sun Cities, according to Arne Bidstrup, one of the founders.

The new organization was formed by a group of individuals who were dissatisfied

with the efforts of the Sun City Home Owners Association regarding the mining issue.

Mr. Bidstrup formerly served on the Sun City Home Owners Association Board of Directors, as well as its environmental services and consumer affairs committee. He is joined at the new group by other former HOA committee members — Gordon Rosier, Allan White and Ann Cororcan.

"We have gotten quite a few people together and explained where we have been and where we are

going," Mr. Bidstrup said. "Some of our members have been working on the mining issue for more than two years."

Among the topics planned for discussion at the initial meeting are:

- Noise resulting from heavy equipment and/or trucks traveling Sun City's streets all hours of the day.

- An increase in respiratory problems among local residents.

- Unpleasant odors emanating from mining operations.

People experiencing any of

these problems are encouraged to attend the Feb. 27 meeting and share their experiences with the group.

Mr. Bidstrup emphasized that the new group is not seeking to shut down mining operations, just relocate them away from residential areas.

Currently, there are no dues for organization members. "But we may have to change that in the future," Mr. Bidstrup said.

For more information, call Mr. Bidstrup at 815-1618 or Mr. White at 933-9375.

CLOSE-UP



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

Red stakes denote the placement of utility lines in the median along 107th Avenue. The Maricopa County Department of Transportation is expected to start work on a pilot project on the median by the end of this month.

GREEN BE GONE

Desert landscaping planned for medians

By **Mike Russo**
Independent Newspapers

Work is expected to begin by the end of the month on a Maricopa County Department of Transportation pilot project to convert a roadway median in Sun City's Phase I to partial desert landscaping, as a means of conserving water.

Several residents living along Alabama Avenue are unhappy about the proposal.

Lanny Brent, a 9-year Sun City resident, said he and many of his neighbors purchased their homes along the medians because they enjoy the greenbelt.

However, Sun City Home Owners Association President Floyd Brown said the organization remains committed to water conservation and is working diligently to achieve savings.

"That is a major water-saving project," said Gerry Unger, a member of the beautification committee who recently met with MCDOT officials to discuss the project.

Mr. Unger said he was told that MCDOT plans to start digging up the lawn this month.

"They plan to remove some of the older trees also," Mr. Unger said. "Some

of those orange trees are quite old."

Frank Urquiza, MCDOT public works supervisor, said the county is waiting for some architectural drawings before proceeding.

The HOA had recommended in a Nov. 26, 2002, letter to Tom Buick, MCDOT director, that the county remove a portion of the grass in the medians along Alabama, Peoria, 107th and 111th avenues, south of Grand Avenue, as a means of conserving water. Maricopa County spends approximately \$200,000 annually watering the medians.

The original HOA proposal recommended removing 44 percent of the grass in the medians. However, the county does not have sufficient money to do that, so an alternative pilot project was proposed by the county, according to Brenda Zambelli, MCDOT project supervisor.

The county devised a plan to do one section of median off 107th Avenue that is surrounded by commercial property, not residential, Ms. Zambelli said.

While HOA would like the county to eventually convert all the medians, Ms. Zambelli said that is not likely to happen — at least not in the immediate future — because

of the county's fiscal woes.

"If the project meets with the residents' approval, we would consider some type of long-range project," Ms. Zambelli said.

She said the county has staked the designated median to delineate utility lines and it is now awaiting a project design.

"We do have a signed contract with a landscaping design firm to come up with a boilerplate design that we and HOA can review," Ms. Zambelli said.

The two sides must still negotiate the issues of maintenance, upkeep and the involvement of the PRIDES, according to Ms. Zambelli.

Currently, medians contain approximately 18,000 square feet of grass. The county is installing two-foot wide dirt berms around each median. This will reduce the grassed area to approximately 15,000 square feet.

HOA recommended further reducing the grassed area by widening the berm to five feet and converting 50 feet at each end of the medians to desert landscaping. This would reduce the grassed area of each median to approximately 10,000 square feet, representing a 44 percent reduction of vegetation.

New group focuses on mining impacts

By **Mike Russo**

Independent Newspapers

The environmental impacts of mining operations will be the major focus of a new Sun City organization.

Frustrated by their inability to bring about environmental changes, especially regarding mining issues, within the framework of a Sun City Home Owners Association committee, several former members of the HOA environmental services and consumer affairs committee have splintered off to form their own group — the Sun City Environmental Association.

"Our major thrust will be the mining issue," said Arne Bidstrup, one of the new organization's founders.

Mr. Bidstrup formerly served on the HOA Board of Directors, as well as its environmental services and consumer affairs committee. He is joined in the new group by other former HOA committee members — Gordon Rosier, Allan White and Ann Corcoran.

The leaders of the new group were the moving forces behind a two-year effort to enact changes in the manner in which mines operate. They sought a reduction in the

hours of operation, the number of trips material-hauling trucks made daily through Sun City, and noise and light pollution generated by the mines.

As has been the case with the HOA committee, the new organization remains concerned about possible health risks posed by the mining operations. More than 20 mines operate in the Agua Fria River.

Mining in Arizona includes not only the extraction of raw materials from the ground, such as rock for use as aggregate material in construction of projects, but such things as the recycling of asphalt.

"We are still concerned about the possible threat of asbestos-related diseases resulting from mining operations," Mr. Bidstrup said.

Mr. Bidstrup said the new group was formed because "we have already tried the legislative avenues and it does not work. We have no choice but to try some other avenues.

"HOA is not supportive of environmental issues," he continued. "They proved that over and over again. They are very politically oriented. They don't want to help us."

Floyd Brown, HOA president, refuted Mr. Bidstrup's

assertion.

Mr. Brown said HOA supports monitoring air quality, despite claims made by Mr. White to the contrary.

Mr. Brown explained that Mr. White, when a member of the HOA environmental services and consumer affairs committee, had requested funding for air quality monitoring.

"We are trying to solicit some (financial) assistance," Mr. Brown continued. "We want to do our own monitoring to determine if the mines are detrimental to the health and welfare of the community."

The first formal meeting of the new group will likely take place in February, according to Mr. Bidstrup. Mr. Bidstrup said he has been besieged by people interested in participating.

Although Mr. Bidstrup is unsure where funding will come from to support the association, he is sure where it will not come from.

"We don't want any financial help from HOA," he proclaimed. "We don't want any affiliation with HOA. We don't want any strings connected."

Mr. Bidstrup said officials with Vulcan Mine, located in El Mirage, adjacent to Sun City, have already contacted him

and have expressed a desire to work with the organization, as has Peoria City Councilman Carlo Leone, who represents the city's Pine District, which includes Sun Cliff Estates. That subdivision is located on Peoria's western border, adjacent to several mining operations, some of which are located on land leased from Maricopa County Dist. 4 Supervisor Max Wilson.

"The city has received many complaints regarding mining operations, especially from residents of the Sun Cliff area," Mr. Leone said. "The mines are actually located in the county, but the problems are affecting Peoria residents," he added.

Mr. Leone said the city council has been working on establishing an ordinance to control the mines' hours of operation.

"Right now they are working 24 hours, around the clock," Mr. Leone said. "We would like them to work five days a week, maybe from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and a half-day on Saturday. My constituents don't want them operating at all."

Mr. Leone also said the city of Peoria has received numerous complaints about the materials' trucks traveling along Northern Avenue, on the city's south end.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT January 1, 2003

County shows interest in median plan HOA suggests sample median to attract comments

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

A plan to convert portions of Phase I medians to desert landscaping in an effort to conserve water has generated some interest by the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, according to Gerry Unger, president of the Sun City Home Owners Association Board of Directors.

Officials of HOA and

MCDOT met Dec. 20 to discuss a suggestion made by the Sun City organization to reduce the medians' grassed areas by approximately 44 percent as a water- and cost-savings measure.

MCDOT was amenable to transforming a portion of a Phase I median as a test to gauge citizens' responses, according to Mr. Unger.

"We zeroed in on one block on 107th Avenue, north of

Peoria Avenue," Mr. Unger said. "There are no houses there.

"We are ready to commit to that one area, which we will use an example to show the community what is in the cards," he continued. "They estimate it will save over half the water used in the area. That is our primary concern. If we don't have water, we have dust."

MCDOT will prepare a

timetable and materials needed for the experiment, that is expected to cost about \$50,000, according to Mr. Unger. That information is expected by mid-January, he noted.

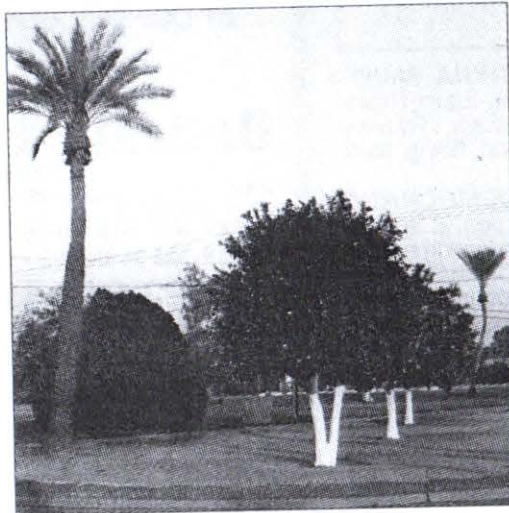
"They will use desert-type materials," Mr. Unger said. "Except about a third of the property will remain as lawn."

"We will try and assist them with the cost factor by seeing if we can get some donated

trees and shrubs," said Jim Corcoran, HOA director and chairman of the group's beautification committee.

"We have agreed if we get a significant donation of trees we will place a plaque recognizing the donation," Mr. Unger said. Acceptance of memorial trees or shrubs could possibly be used in the future if MCDOT approves

See **Median** — Page 5



Photos by Mike Russo/independent Newspapers
The Sun City Home Owners Association has suggested Maricopa County convert the medians in Phase I from their existing state, at left, to partial desert landscaping, right, to conserve water and money.

OVER

Median

Continued From Page 1

HOA's proposal. Mr. Unger noted.

HOA sent a letter to Tom Buick, Maricopa County Department of Transportation director, in November proposing the county remove about 44 percent of the grass in the Phase I medians along Alabama, Peoria, 107th and 111th avenues, south of Grand Avenue, as a means of conserving water and money.

Maricopa County spends approximately \$200,000 annually watering the medians.

Currently, medians contain approximately 18,000 square feet of grass. The county is installing two-foot wide dirt berms around each median. This will reduce the grassed area to approximately 15,000 square feet.

HOA recommends further reducing the grassed area by widening the berm to five feet and converting 50 feet at each end of the medians to desert landscaping. This would reduce the grassed area of each median to approximately 10,000 square feet, representing a 44 percent reduction of vegetation.

Mr. Unger said HOA has

received several letters and phone calls from residents favoring the plan, but he concedes not everyone enthusiastically supports the change.

"Many residents want the grass retained," Mr. Unger said.

Several residents living along Alabama Avenue have voiced their displeasure with the proposal.

Lanny Brent, a 9-year Sun City resident, said he and many of his neighbors purchased their homes along the medians because they enjoy the greenbelt.

Mr. Unger would not be opposed to allowing one or two of the medians to remain all grass for aesthetic purposes, but he would prefer the water-conserving alternative.

"To save water is the prime objective," Mr. Unger said.

Mr. Unger said the county seemed very receptive to HOA's suggestion. "But this is all very preliminary and verbal," he cautioned.

HOA officials buoyed by mine closure

Order issued to restore land

By **Mike Russo**

Independent Newspapers

The closure of a mining operation in the city of Phoenix's southwestern corner has provided encouragement to groups fighting sand and gravel operations in and adjacent to the Agua Fria River.

The mine, operated by All Star Materials, ceased operation voluntarily in May, in anticipation of the city issuing a cease and desist order.

Neighbors in the Laveen Village area of Phoenix complained to city officials that excavation at the site had altered paths of water flow and represented a potential flood threat. In addition, the mining operation was gouging the hillsides, making an unsightly mess and generating a great deal of air and noise pollution.

Those are also among the numerous concerns expressed by area residents.

"We have been fighting this battle for almost two years," said Arne Bidstrup, chairman of the Sun City Home Owners Association Environmental Services Committee, which has been at the forefront of the effort to curtail

mining in residential areas.

Mr. Bidstrup noted there are more than 25 mining operations in the Agua Fria riverbed, and air, noise and light pollution, caused by both the mines and trucks hauling mining materials, have been constant complaints voiced by residents of Sun City, Sun City West and Ventana Lakes in Peoria.

Mr. Bidstrup is hoping Maricopa County heeds the example set by Phoenix and reins in some of the mining operations; at least those operating near residential areas.

Although he would like to see that happen, Mr. Bidstrup is not optimistic.

"The county has been very unresponsive or they would not have let this get started at all," Mr. Bidstrup said.

He pointed out that although the All Star Materials mine site is in Phoenix, it was Maricopa County that issued the excavation permit.

"This is very typical and is exactly what we figured would happen from Maricopa County," Mr. Bidstrup said. "They have been very unresponsive to the needs of the citizens of Maricopa County.

"We would hope the county would learn something; that they cannot just issue permits in residential areas," Mr. Bidstrup continued.

"Sens. (Brenda) Burns and (Ed) Cirillo have been the only legislators who decided to step up to the plate and protect citizens of Arizona from the sand and gravel industry," Mr. Bidstrup proclaimed.

Another member of the HOA Environmental Services Committee, Jim Corcoran,

has also been critical of the Maricopa Flood Control District. He said the agency has not done all it can to protect residents from potential flooding problems that could result from mining.

"We have contacted the Maricopa County Flood Control District to complain about the fact that they (the mine's officials) have not obtained a flood control permit as individuals are required to do," Mr. Corcoran said. "The mines are tearing up the entire riverbed and they don't get the permits."

Mr. Bidstrup does not envision a great deal of relief with the scheduled signing of Senate Bill 1344 by Gov. Jane Hull on Sept. 17.

"We went to the hearing and tried to get that particular bill removed because it does absolutely nothing for the citizens of Arizona," Mr. Bidstrup said. "It is run totally by the mining association.

"Doug Martin, state mine inspector, will oversee implementation of the bill," he added.

Mr. Bidstrup does approve of one aspect of the legislation.

"The new bill does state the land must be reclaimed when mining is completed," he said. "It's great that the city of Phoenix is forcing All Star Materials to restore the hills."

Their resolve steeled by two years of fighting, HOA plans a major assault on mining operations in the coming year, according to Mr. Bidstrup.

"We are going after them like never before in 2003," he said. "We intend to do whatever we have to do to stop mining operations in residential areas.

"We intend this coming year to spend whatever amount of money we need to put a stop to the horrendous amount of destruction that is being done to the Valley as far as pollution and noise," Mr. Bidstrup declared.

Daily News-Sun • Thursday, Aug. 30, 2001

Coalition raises visibility

SAND AND GRAVEL FIGHT: Residents of Sun City, Peoria marshal support against mining industry

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Arne Bidstrup of Sun City isn't backing down from his fight against the Vulcan Materials Co. in El Mirage.

Bidstrup, whose property borders the mining operation in the Agua Fria Basin between Grand Avenue and Bell Road, teamed with the Sun City Home Owners Association, residents from

Ventana Lakes in Peoria and concerned neighbors living near the operations. Their goal is to close the local operation — or at least get state legislators on their side for the fight against sand and gravel operations in the area.

Ventana Lakes residents have joined the fight against mining in the area because of the dust produced and the health risks associated with increased truck traffic fumes. Some residents in the Peoria retirement community have cited the truck fumes and increased dust as a cause for their illnesses.

"It's come to the point where the mining operations in the Agua Fria basin are not compatible with residential communities," said Gordon Rosier of the Sun City Home Owners

Association. "What we are doing is trying to get them the hell out of there."

Vulcan officials, however, said they are trying to work with community groups to ease concerns about compatibility.

"If someone has a problem with our operations, we hope that they will call us so we can fix it," said Mark Reardon, spokesman for Vulcan. "We want to be good neighbors with the community, and have been addressing concerns as they are brought to our attention."

Rosier, meanwhile, has been working on the technicalities of permitting and looking into any possible violations that could get the plant closed down, while Bidstrup has been working with communities throughout the

greater Phoenix area to marshal support against the entire mining industry.

In his efforts, Bidstrup managed to draw lobbyist Phillip Gagle into the mix.

Gagle, a former official with the Arizona Rock Products Association, has promised to sign on with those working against Vulcan to advise them how to lobby legislators.

And Bidstrup said he is trying to get together 100,000 voters who will back legislative candidates who won't be influenced by the sand and gravel industry.

A former legislator, meanwhile, is signing on with the industry. Sen. Rusty Bowers of Mesa, R-District 21, announced

See Coalition seeks, A5

OVER

From A1

Aug. 21 he is resigning effective today to take a job as executive director of the Arizona Rock Products Association. The organization represents sand and gravel operations and protects their interests at the Capitol. It is the same organization that Gagle headed for 10 years.

Gagle was not available for comment Wednesday, but Bidstrup said he doesn't think gathering 100,000 voters is unrealistic.

"There are a lot of people who are upset at what's going on," Bidstrup said. "The sand and gravel industry needs a new CEO, so they go and hire Sen. Rusty Bowers.

"Here the sand and gravel people have a senator on their side," Bidstrup said. "That should concern everyone."

In his fight against the sand and gravel industry, Bidstrup said he is trying to get legislators elected who will support their constituents in the Sun Cities and not just talk about it.

"They can't buy us off with key chains and pictures of Frank Sinatra anymore," he said.

As for Sun Citizens lobbying against the sand and gravel industry, Vulcan officials declined comment on the issue and said they were more concerned with helping the community than fighting against it.

Rosier, though, has been exploring the possibility that asbestos are being emitted from the Vulcan plant. Rosier said he discovered that the El Mirage plant has not been tested for the contaminant since 1977.

After making several failed

attempts to get the plant's air tested, Rosier finally made headway with the Mine Safety and Health Administration, which tested the air quality earlier this year.

Safe levels of asbestos were found, but Rosier said the fact that any particulates were found is cause for concern.

"I wondered why there was such a difference in what safe exposure was," he said. "MSHA standards require no more than two fibers per cubic centimeter, when both the EPA and OSHA seem to agree that there is no safe level at all."

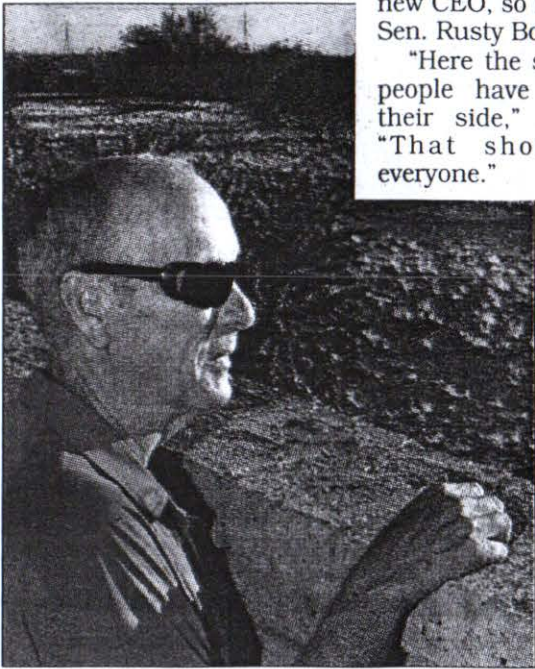
According to the study conducted by MSHA, 23 air samples were tested for asbestos with none registering higher than one fiber per cubic centimeter. Two bulk samples tested found no asbestos detected.

Phil Howard, assistant Arizona State Mine Inspector, said his office has yet to review the results and therefore has not determined if the air quality is something that should be studied further.

Although the asbestos levels came back safe, as classified by Christopher Findlay of MSHA, studies have shown that even a small amount of asbestos can be harmful.

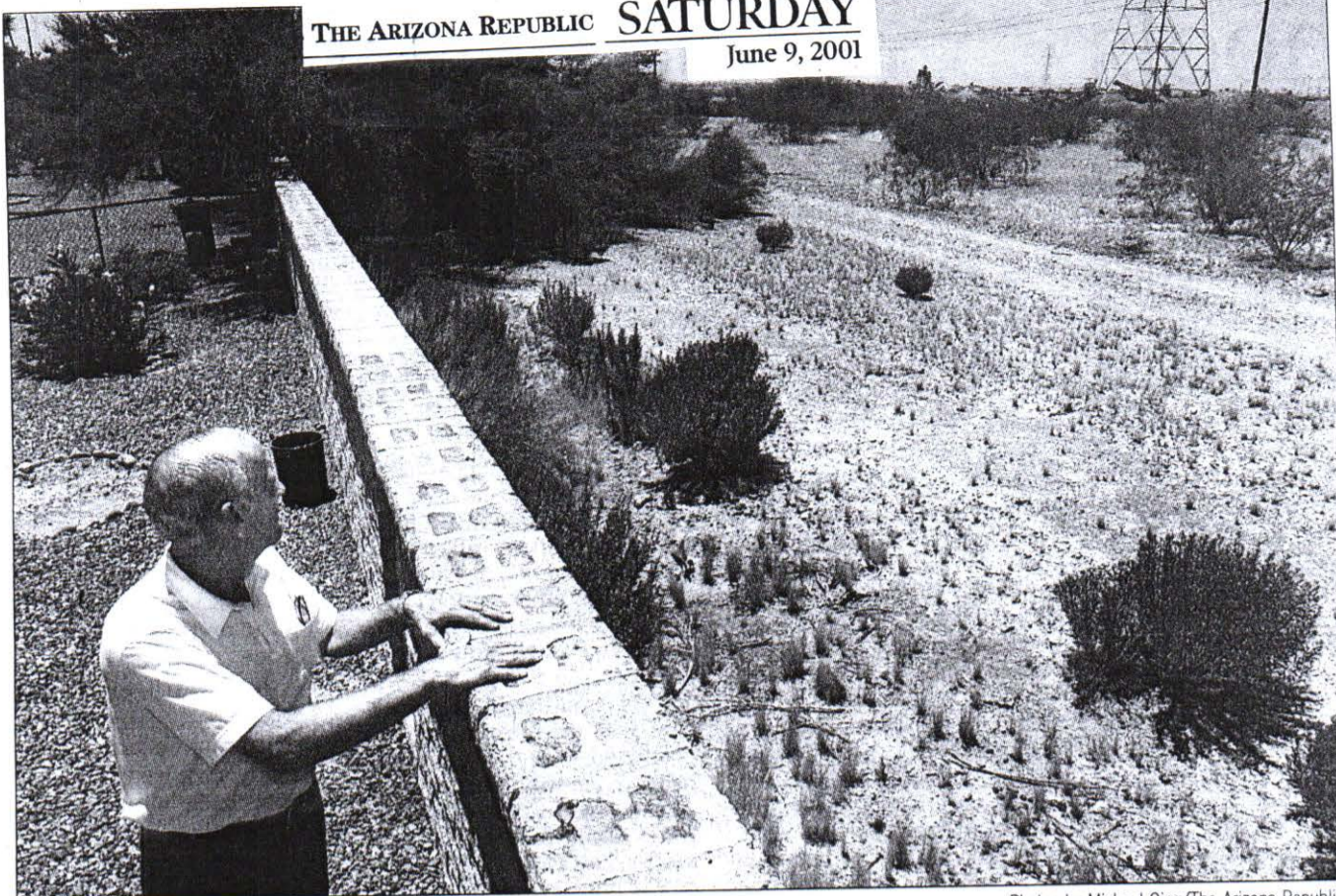
A study conducted by the University of Minnesota showed that workers exposed to less than two fibers per cubic centimeter were susceptible to higher health risks than those who were not exposed to any asbestos. The study, however, didn't specify the health risks to those not breathing in the minute amounts on a daily basis.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Arne Bidstrup says the noise and pollution from the Vulcan plant started after he and his wife, Joyce, moved into their home on Spartan Court in Sun City.



Photos by Michael Ging/The Arizona Republic

Sun City resident Arne Bidstrup can see Vulcan Materials Co. from his back yard. The lights used during recent construction, he said, enable him to read his newspaper in his house without turning on any lights.

SC protests gravel pit

Residents seek controls on longtime operation

By David Madrid
The Arizona Republic

Vulcan Materials Co. insists it is a good neighbor.

But some Sun City residents say the massive sand and gravel operation near Bell Road on the Agua Fria River doesn't belong next to a residential neighborhood.

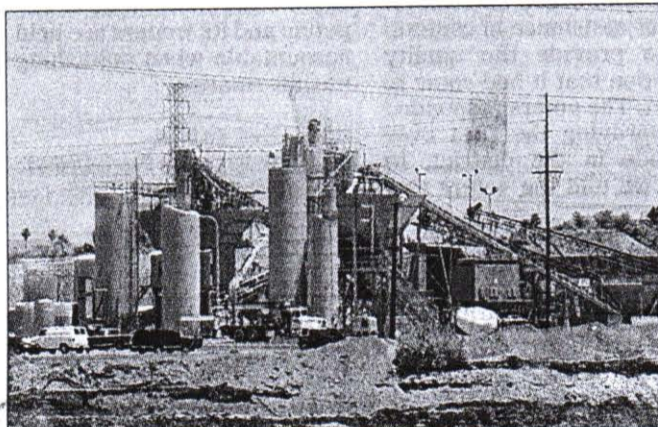
And though complaints of noise, dust and lights coming from the plant 24 hours a day were explained away as the byproducts of plant construction that is ending in a week, the neighbors are not satisfied.

Arne Bidstrup complained about lights so bright at the plant that he could read his newspaper in his house at night without turning on his own lights. The Sun City resident, whose back yard overlooks the sand and gravel operation, also complained about non-stop noise and work schedules.

But the noise and lights were due to the construction and remodeling of an asphalt plant, said Mark Reardon, vice president and general manager of Vulcan's Arizona and New Mexico operations. Vulcan is based in Birmingham, Ala.

"The noise and dust will be reduced by all the upgraded equipment," Reardon said.

Bidstrup acknowledges that the noise and dust have been reduced since his first complaints.



The sand and gravel operation near Bell Road and the Agua Fria River has been there since the 1960s.

“All we're asking for is let's have some testing done and find out what kind of pollutants are coming out of there.”

Arne Bidstrup
Sun City resident

Yet he and other Sun City residents aren't satisfied. They complain that the sand and gravel facility's asphalt recycling plant is producing odors.

"All we're asking for is let's have some testing done and find out what kind of pollutants are coming out of there," Bidstrup said.

But he's not likely to get much help from some of his state legislators.

Sen. Ed Cirillo, R-Sun

City West, said his main concern is that trucks coming in and out of the plant are adhering to pollution standards. Most of the problems the Sun City neighbors were complaining about were most likely from the construction, he said.

"I think the new plant will be better than the old one," he said.

Gordon Rosier, director of the Sun City Homeowner's Association, complains

that there are no environmental impact studies or public hearings required for sand and gravel mining operations.

"It doesn't do much good to build a plant and then have the public respond," Rosier said.

Reardon points out that the sand and gravel plant has been there since the 1960s.

"We operate in 22 states and we think we are the best neighbor of anyone in our business," he said.

Homeowners Association officials asked Sen. Brenda Burns, R-Glendale, to help put some controls on the sand and gravel operations.

They requested that the Legislature ask the federal Environmental Protection Agency to come out and test the emissions from the plant.

Burns said she would like to have a meeting with residents, officials from the county, the state Department of Environmental Quality, city entities, legislators and those from the industry to work out the problems.

But she said that she would not call the EPA, but rather the residents should contact their congressman, U.S. Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz., if they desire EPA action.

Reach the reporter at david.madrid@arizona-republic.com or (602) 444-6926.

FEBRUARY 5-11, 1992 —SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT—

Recycling efforts on the rise in Sun Cities

Residents helpful when it comes to filling local bins

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

Sun Citian Don Nichols pulls a stack of newspapers out of the trunk of his Grand Torino.

"I've been recycling for 17 years," he says as he carries his papers to join the other stacks inside the Lions-sponsored bin behind the Greenway Terrace Shopping Center.

"I didn't (recycle) until I came to Sun City. I think everyone is pretty conscious of doing it," he says.

A growing number of people are doing what Mr. Nichols is doing — donating to area newspaper bins.



Photo by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

Mac Wortman bundles and stacks newspapers at the bin behind the Sundome Shopping Center. More than five tons of newspapers are donated to local bins each day and Lions officials even greater numbers in 1992.

Recycling donations are up 20 percent in the Sun Cities.

Gene Gravlin, chairman of the Lion's recycling project, attributes the increase to more donations at existing bins and the start of a curbside recycling program by Parks and Sons.

Originally, it was thought the curbside program would reduce donations to the bins, but the opposite is true. Recycling donations are up 15 percent to the bins, Mr. Gravlin says. The Lions accept newspaper and glass at 18 bins in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown. Newspapers make up the bulk of the donations.

The curbside program increased donations by 5 percent, Mr. Gravlin says. Parks and Sons, which began curbside recycling on four of its 28 routes in June, picks up newspapers, glass jars and bottles and

aluminum cans in Sun City and Sun City West. The items then are donated to the Lions.

Sydney Parks, one of the owners of Parks and Sons, says the company runs eight recycling routes right now and plans to add four more in mid-February, which will include routes in Youngtown.

The company hopes to have most of the routes in Sun City and Sun City West completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Gravlin expects donations to be up 30 percent when the company completes the curbside routes. And while more people are recycling, some still have misconceptions about what recycling facilities will accept.

"They bring plastic and phone books into the bins all the time,"

■ See RECYCLE, Page 3

■ RECYCLE

From Page 1

Mr. Gravlin says. The Lions don't accept these two items because it doesn't have a buyer for them, he says.

"We only accept what we can make money on." After expenses, the project nets about \$165,000 per year.

Because people move into the area or return from other homes, it makes getting the message across difficult. Even though the program is "old hat" to many residents, to some it is new, he says.

Not understanding can lead to frustration, says Chuck Jongert, manager of ABCO Recycling, 12229 Grand Ave., El Mirage.

"People don't understand because they've never been instructed. They're told to recycle but not how," he says. He adds he recently had a call from someone who thought there was no place near the

Sun Cities to take plastic items to be recycled.

Mr. Jongert says ABCO recycling accepts plastic if people turn in their aluminum cans as well. ABCO accepts glass, cardboard and plastic but does not pay money for them.

"It's economically not feasible to do," Jongert says. "There's really no money in plastic. If (we're) lucky, (we) break even," he says.

For the most part, people follow the directions given to them on flyers provided by Parks and Sons, says Ms. Parks.

Ms. Parks stresses that curbside recycling is not meant to be a substitute for the bins. "We don't want people to stop taking it to the bins."

Julio Hernandez, co-owner of J & R Recycling, 12910 W. Santa Fe, Surprise says most people follow the recycling rules.

"Maybe a first-time customer doesn't know about the guidelines," he says. Mr. Hernandez accepts glass bottles and paper which he donates to the Lions but asks that newspapers have no coupons or inserts in them. He says sometimes people cut up telephone books and try to insert them into the newspapers.

Mr. Hernandez says he will accept plastic also but does not get receive much of it. J & R Recycling buys aluminum, radiators, copper, brass, batteries, lead, stainless steel and nursery-seed cans.

ABCO Recycling buys ferrous and non-ferrous metals, aluminum, batteries, electric motors, radiators and alternators. It does not accept magazines, styrofoam, plastic bags or phone books, Mr. Jongert says.

The local Soroptimists maintain four drop-off locations for

aluminum cans: Thunderbird Plaza Shopping Center, 99th and Thunderbird Boulevard; Greenway Terrace Shopping Center, 99th Avenue and Greenway Road; Plaza del Sol Shopping Center, 107th and Peoria Avenues; Bell Camino Shopping Center, Del Webb Boulevard and Bell Road.

Sun City residents begin efforts to ban smoking throughout county

By BRET McKEAND

A group of Sun City residents who were successful in their attempt to have smoking banned in area recreation centers are now seeking a similar ban county-wide.

The Smokers Association of Sun City, led by Sidney J. Goldman, have begun gathering signatures in an effort to convince county supervisors that a law should be adopted which would prohibit smoking in all public places throughout Maricopa County.

"We (Sun City) are unincorporated and so we are unprotected," says Goldman.

"If we want smoking banned throughout the county, it will be up to our supervisors to take action."

It was Goldman who led the fight to have smoking banned in all Sun City recreation centers back in 1983. The group first organized in March of that year and soon began circulating petitions in an effort to have the issue voted upon by the entire Rec Centers membership.

Goldman and his supporters gathered 7,052 signatures by September, 1983, and in December, the smoking ban issue was approved by a majority of the voting members.

The matter didn't end there. In fact, it was just beginning.

Another group of residents felt the ban was a violation of their civil rights and contested its validity in Superior Court.

Their challenge was eventually dismissed.

In an unprecedented move, the Rec Centers Board of Directors held a second election on the issue in 1984. Again, the membership approved the ban, 17,392 to 14,987.

At the time, one of the criticisms leveled against the adoption of a smoking ban would be that it would have an adverse effect on the sale of homes in Sun City.

Goldman says the smoking ban has not hurt the sales of homes in Sun City over the past three years. Citing figures he collected from the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc., he says 1,975 homes were sold in 1984 (the year the ban went into effect), 1,641 in 1985 and 1,846 last year.

In the first five months of 1987, says Goldman, 740 homes were sold. "If it continues throughout the year at this rate, the total for 1987 should be about 1,776."

Goldman says the next logical step is to ban tobacco smoking in public places throughout the county. He says his group is working with a number of other non-smoking groups in the county to have a county-wide smoking ban adopted.

"We are urging people to write or call Carole Carpenter (District 4 County Supervisor)," says Goldman.

"We hope to present our petitions to the Board of Supervisors Sept. 10 and request that smoking be banned in all public places throughout the county."



James Garcia, *The Phoenix Gazette*

A wall bearing a message welcoming visitors to Sun City sits on one of the community's grassy medians.

Median event

Opinions vary on plan to replace grass with gravel

By Susan Martin
Gazette Northwest Bureau

SUN CITY — Maricopa County may or may not have a fight on its hands over a proposal to convert medians south of Grand Avenue from grass to desert landscaping.

Residents interviewed by *The Phoenix Gazette* have expressed approval, disapproval or indifference toward the plan, but they generally agree it is best for conserving water.

One organization has proclaimed its opposition. Citizens for Self Government says the county would not spend enough money to make an attractive desert landscape, such as is present along Johnson Boulevard in Sun City West.

"What they have in mind is more bare-ground medians. Picture a vacant lot 60 feet wide and eight miles long," stated a CSG leaflet delivered to residents living south of Grand.

Officials from the county Highway Department have asked the Sun City Home Owners Association to gather residents' opinions on the matter before a decision is reached.

Conversion of the medians north of Grand Avenue six years ago sparked some protest as Del



A worker mows the grass along a median on Alabama Avenue.

The Phoenix Gazette

E. Webb Development Co. prepared to turn its median maintenance chores over to the county.

Public Works Director Robert Esterbrooks said he favors eliminating the grass — which is irrigated — but keeping the trees

and creating an attractive setting.

He said conversion in the near future would be practical because Sun City Water Co. plans to install new water lines in the area. Also, the change would comply with a mandate by the Depart-

ment of Water Resources to cut back on non-essential water uses.

Esterbrooks said that during the summer, the approximately eight miles of grassy medians require about 200,000 gallons of

See • Medians, NW-D

Medians

FROM INVV-

water a day, and six county maintenance workers spend most of their hours mowing the strips.

Edith Richardson, who lives along 107th Avenue, said she approves of the proposed plan.

"They're out there working all the time. They mow whether there's any grass or not — it's always dusty in the house."

She added: "I like the green grass, but there's nothing seriously wrong with desert."

Marjorie Skrocki said any conversion along 107th should be delayed.

"It won't be long before they'll have to widen the street because of the heavy traffic, so why not wait and do it all at once?"

She said water use would not be so high except that the pipes have broken a number of times in the past few years.

Margaret Schramka, a resident for 24 years, said it "makes no difference" whether the medians are grass or desert.

"It's cooler with the grass, but all the dogs go out there," she said.

Marian Crismond agrees that the grass is cooler and wants it to remain, but suggested installing sprinklers in order to use less water.

"I would hate to have the grass gone, but it is wasteful," said Crismond, whose front yard has suffered several floods after water lines have broken.

Steve Hansen, who also lives along 107th, said the gravel would increase the heat. He suggested reducing the width of the medians and widening the road.

"It's so pretty to look miles down and see all the grass and palm trees," he said.

Bill Langdon, who lives along Alabama Avenue, said he prefers

the grass, although it increases the humidity in the area.

"When I look outside I'd like to see green ... but for conservation, they should put in gravel ... We should go for it and be open-minded."

Elizabeth Olson also prefers grass but is concerned about saving water: "I haven't made my mind up yet. I'm not sure how it would look."

Fern Lamb said either land-

scaping would be acceptable "but the desert is a mess to clean up."

The Arizona native added: "I love the grass, but I'm used to desert. Whatever is best for everybody concerned."

Sun Cities reluctantly attracting development in surrounding area 5/24 1984

By JIM WALSH
Northwest Valley Bureau

First, cotton fields became a sprawling retirement island full of neat houses separated by green golf courses and spotless streets.

A second, smaller island then was added in the far northwest Valley, with larger houses separated by even more golf courses.

But developers other than the Del E. Webb Development Co., which built Sun City and Sun City West, the nation's largest retirement kingdom, are getting set to surround the islands with a metropolis.

"Anytime you have land being developed, it changes the character of the area," said Kate Hansen, vice president of RGW Cos., planner of Desert Harbor, a master-planned community in Peoria that bounds Sun City's eastern wall above Thunderbird Rd.

Perhaps the most drastic change could result from a plan to build a community for 70,000 to 80,000 residents on 7,000 acres west of Grand Avenue, near Sun City West.

In about a month, the Estes Co. will decide whether the new community, a mixture of family and retirement housing and clean industry, will be built, said Ron Haarer, president of the company.

Palmer-Whitehead Inc., a Phoenix real-estate company that owns the property, has asked Surprise to annex the land.

"In five, 10 years, you won't recognize Surprise," said Payne Palmer, vice president of Palmer-Whitehead Inc.

Bill Forman, president of the Sun City Homeowners Association, said many residents fled the traffic, long lines and frantic pace of major Midwestern and Eastern cities when they moved to the retirement haven.

Along with attracting more people to the area, new developments are likely to produce and compound such problems as traffic, Forman said.

"The traffic is going to build. There's no doubt about that," he said. "The use of shopping centers is going to increase. That's good for business owners, but difficult for the people who live here."

With more people in the area, "there might be the potential" for a rise in Sun City's low incidence of crime, said Bert Brosius, an executive officer of the Sun City Posse.

The posse is preparing for the population growth by planning its first organized drive to recruit members this fall for increased patrols, he said.

In Sun City West, Allen Powell, chairman of the Property Owners and Residents Association's planning committee, concedes that the developments currently under construction "are very nice. They're molded after the Sun Cities."

But, like many residents, Powell said he worries about urban sprawl swallowing the area with look-alike convenience stores and tacky strip developments. In this nightmare, Bell Road would become the west Valley equivalent of Apache Trail.

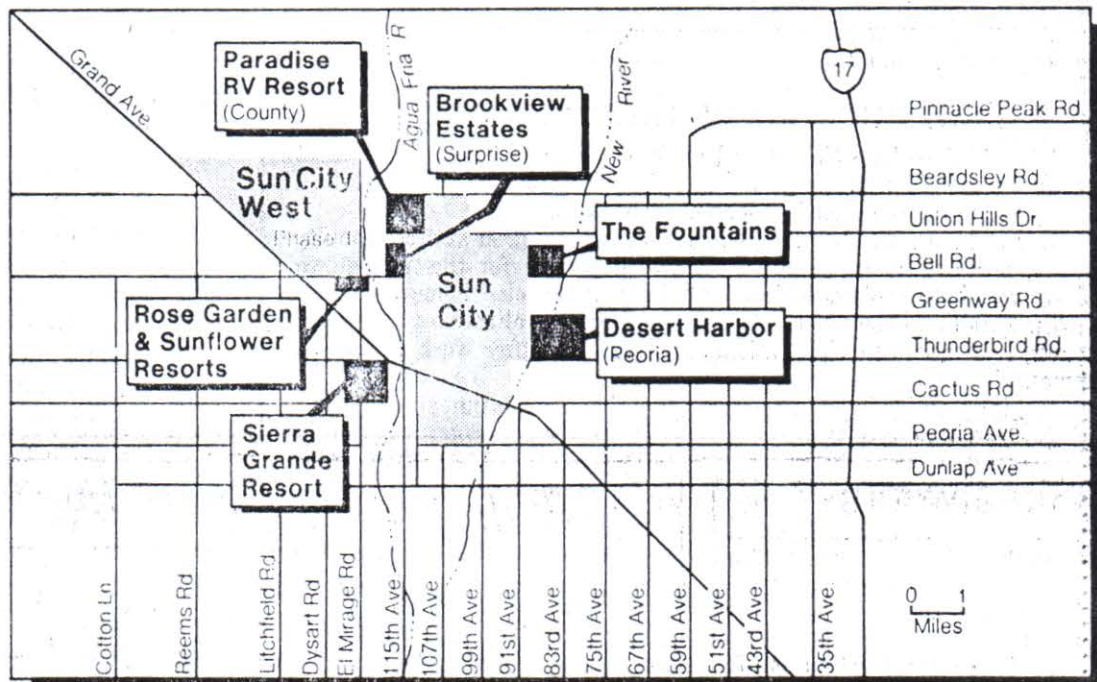
However, Surprise Town Manager Harold Yingling said growth "is going to happen anyway. Let's plan it and do it in an orderly fashion."

Yingling said he realizes many Sun City and Sun City West residents like their communities just fine and don't want the area to change, but "we haven't got ours made yet, like they have."

For Surprise and surrounding towns, the growth "has to be very beneficial," he said. "It creates an economic boost. It's

— Attracting, Extra 3

Development surrounding Sun City



Gus Walker / Republic

Major developments planned, under construction or completed in the northwest Valley include Paradise Resort, north of Sun City in Peoria, with 950 recreational vehicle-travel trailer lots; Rose Gardens, in Surprise between Sun City and Sun City West, 400 mobile home spots built and 200 planned; Desert Harbor, in Peoria east of Sun City on

Thunderbird Boulevard, with 2,400 housing units planned along a 46-acre artificial lake; Brookview Estates and Country Club, in Surprise between Sun City and Sun City West, with 880 residential lots; Sierra Grande Hotel and Resort in El Mirage; The Fountains, in Peoria east of Sun City, a 60-acre, 880-unit planned community.

Attracting

Continued from Extra 1

going to generate jobs and revenue."

The mere mention of sprawl irks many of the developers. They say that their communities will produce "a quality environment" and that to do otherwise makes little business sense.

The builders vow not to repeat the mistakes that led to the bland and undistinctive appearance of some Valley areas.

"That's exactly what we're trying to avoid. Nobody wants that," said Marshall Greenberg, president of the Northwest Development Group, which promotes growth in the area.

"It's a lot easier to market (a nice) product," Palmer said. "It's what people want. It's self-interest for the developer."

Ted Micek, marketing director for Mountain View Development, builders of Brookview Estates and Country Club in Surprise west of Sun City, said the high cost of land in the area should shut out poorly planned and badly built developments.

Micek said property costs \$8 to \$10 per square foot, so only nice developments can generate the profits investors expect.

Greenberg said that Sun City and Sun City West have set the standard for area development and that marketing studies confirm the seniors will accept nothing but the best.

"Sun City and Sun City West are very well-planned communities," said Jim Moyer of Dayspring Development Co., one of three partners in The Fountains, a 60-acre master-planned community at Bell Road and 87th Avenue.

"Those communities will retain their flavor."

Entertainment and restaurants will be near Sun City and Sun City West and are wanted by residents, Moyer said.

Several developers interviewed recently agreed that the retirement communities are a magnet for development, begrudgingly conceding they are a golden magnet at that.

Webb estimates the net worth of 58,000 Sun City and Sun City West residents at \$5.8 billion, with that figure growing about \$160 million yearly as about 1,600 retirees migrate to Sun City West.

The company says the elderly residents have deposited more than \$2 billion in area savings institutions and in 1984 spent more than \$200 million for retail goods.

Although some developments, such as Pueblo Norte on Thunderbird Boulevard in Peoria near Sun City, are aimed at retirees, many others are not.

Brookview will probably have an age restriction of 40 or older for its 880 residents.

A three-story Sheraton Hotel in Brookview will appeal largely to friends of Sun City and Sun City West residents visiting during the winter, but it is expected to attract other vacationers as well, Micek said.

The Fountains may have some retirement sections but will aim at all segments of the housing market, Moyer said.

And while Desert Harbor and the Estes developments also may accommodate small caches of retirees, they mostly are aimed at attracting younger residents.

The area has a shortage of patio homes and town houses for young professionals without children who will be drawn to the area by Sperry Flight Systems' expansion in Glendale and other high-technology companies along the Black Canyon Freeway, Desert Harbor's Hansen said.

Desert Harbor, which also plans a luxury hotel, expects to offer 2,400 homes and have a population of more than 5,000 with two persons per household, she said.

The development has a nautical theme with a 46-acre lake 12- to 15-feet deep, with many lots offering lake frontage.

Greenberg advocates using the Santa Fe railroad tracks along Grand Avenue as a commuter train service to Phoenix, but concedes that the railroad doesn't think it could make a profit and opposes the idea.

Congressmen push sewer project

Release of funding for installation of the 75th Avenue sewer line has taken a major step forward through efforts of Arizona congressmen, Home Owners Association president Mike Komar believes.

Last week, Sen. Dennis DeCon-

cini notified the HOA that he will contact the Environmental Protection Agency to seek immediate release of federal funds for the project.

Earlier, Congressmen Bob Stump and Eldon Rudd indicated they, too, have asked the EPA to expedite release of the funding.

THE HOA HAD contacted the three legislators, asking them to intervene on behalf of residents for the long awaited project that will provide temporary relief for Sun City's problem of sewer line overload.

"I think this will give us the 75th Avenue line by the end of the year," Komar said on receipt of DeConcini's letter Friday.

"It is my position to contact the agency requesting immediate release of the necessary funds for construction of the interim 75th Avenue project," the senator wrote.

THE EPA has delayed funding while it explores alternatives in the context of a regional system analysis, DeConcini said.

"The regional concerns outlined by the agency do have validity, and I will then ask that the agency review possible alternatives for the 99th Avenue interceptor sewer, taking into consideration the needs of other localities, Youngtown, Goodyear, Avondale, and Tolleson," he continued in his letter.

"Included in this request will be my strong urging and desire to see

the regional concerns addressed as quickly as possible in order that the same situation which is transpiring with the 75th Avenue project does not reoccur."

THE 99TH AVENUE interceptor line, planned for installation in the 1980s, is designed for capacity as the ultimate solution to Sun City's sewage load problem.

DeConcini said Michael Crusa, his special projects director in Phoenix, will work closely with Komar until the matter is resolved.

Both Stump and Rudd notified Komar they have contacted EPA officials concerning the funding delay.

"I can appreciate DeConcini's position on the 99th Avenue project," Komar said. "We need to solve the immediate problem first, and that is 75th Avenue.

"WHAT WE NEED is political pull, and now we are getting it."

Crusa met with Komar and HOA board member Ellis Danner last week and was given data compiled by Danner's study committee.

"With the concerted efforts now being made to get this thing going, we feel there is an excellent chance that our target of completion by the end of 1977 will be met," Komar said Friday.

"Since the total sewage disposal problem for this area takes in not only Sun City but Youngtown, Peoria, Glendale, Phoenix, and other communities, it is ultimately a matter of total cooperation."



Legislators act on sewer issue

Local efforts to expedite funding for construction of area sewer lines have prompted action from two Arizona congressmen.

Rep. Bob Stump of District 3 has contacted the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator asking for quick release of federal funds for the sewer line projects.

In addition, an aide to Sen. Dennis DeConcini is to meet with Home Owners Association president Mike Komar this week for more familiarization on the sewer issue, including short-range and long-range implications.

LAST MONTH, HOA officials sent a detailed report on the sewer problem to DeConcini, Stump, and Rep. Eldon Rudd of District 4 asking their aid in getting approval for funding to install new sewer lines.

Komar also wrote to the mayors of area communities asking that they contact legislators on the sewer topic.

Youngtown Mayor Norman Shrenk consequently wrote to Arizona congressmen, including Sen. Barry Goldwater, on the matter, and Komar last week expressed gratitude for Shrenk's interest.

FUNDING approval apparently has run into snags at the EPA office in San Francisco. Plans call for installation of an interim line on 75th Avenue to relieve line loads to the Phoenix regional treatment plant as the first project.

DeConcini indicated his interest in helping speed the plans during a talk in Sun City early in June.

Last week, Komar received a letter from Stump, including a copy of another letter Stump has sent to EPA administrator Douglas Costle.

IN THE letter to Costle, Stump wrote that the problem has existed since 1961 and that Sun City and surrounding communities have been trying to solve it.

"As of June 10, 1977, there have been several delays in the paper processing through the EPA San Francisco office," Stump wrote.

"The prospects of construction getting underway to complete the urgently needed interim sewer project on 75th Avenue will be delayed again unless your office directs immediate approval of a construction grant and takes immediate action to proceed with the present plan.

"At the present time there exists a serious health menace.

"**EQUALLY** serious are the delays in obtaining a 99th Avenue interceptor sewer, which has run into several snags with EPA."

Stump requested Costle's assistance resolving the funding issue so construction can begin at the earliest possible time.

Komar praised Stump's action and the interest he has shown in the issue. Komar said he also plans to confer with Mayor Sterling Ridge of Glendale to learn if Ridge has contacted legislators on the matter.

HEALTH MENACE CITED

EPA Urged To Speed Sewers

By HELEN CORNELL
Gazette Correspondent

Congressman Bob Stump, D-Ariz., has asked Douglas M. Costle, new administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to speed up two sewer projects for the west side where "serious health menace exists."

In a letter to Costle, Stump said, "Since 1961 the cities of Sun City and Glendale and surrounding communities (Phoenix, Peoria) have been working toward solving a long-standing sewer disposal problem.

"AS OF June 10, 1977, there have been several delays in the paper processing through the EPA, San Francisco office. The prospects of construction getting underway to complete the urgently needed interim sewer project on 75th Avenue will be delayed again unless your office directs immediate approval of a construction grant and takes immediate action to proceed with the present plan.

"Equally serious are the delays in obtaining a 99th Avenue interceptor sewer, which has run into several snags with EPA."

The Sun City Home Owners Association with the help of Glendale's director of engineering compiled a detailed history of both projects and the problems encountered by west side communities in getting adequate sewage systems.

HOA PRESIDENT Mike Komar sent the information to area congressmen, legislators, county officials and to the mayors of neighboring communities asking their help in getting the projects "off dead center."

Youngtown Mayor Norman Shrenk sent letters to Sen. Barry Goldwater, Stump and Sen. Dennis DeConcini, as well as to west side state legislators asking them to urge EPA to move ahead on the projects.

The Sun City Taxpayers Association and Sun City Town Meeting Association also have taken a lead in urging solution to the sewer problems.

HERE'S HOW things stand on the interim project:

- Jim Scanlan, assistant chief of the Water Quality Control Bureau, State Health Department, said EPA officials were in town this week. County, state and EPA officials have reviewed project designs by John Carollo Engineers and made some recommendations to the firm by telephone. Written plan reviews are to follow.

- Bob Preisler of Carollo Engineers said the design modifications made by phone have been completed. As soon as the written review is received from county, state and EPA officials, and the firm is sure necessary revisions have been made, the plans will be turned over to the project coordinator.

- Once plans are approved, Glendale can take the next step, in submitting an application for 75 percent federal grant funds for construction. The projects are funded one step at a time.

- Formal approval of the construction grant application may take four to six weeks. However, Scanlan said funds are available and will be released for the project

- Glendale and Phoenix are negotiating an agreement to provide up to 4.6 million gallons per day sewage capacity in a Phoenix line on 75th Avenue south of Indian School Road. That capacity will relieve the overload demands on the 83rd Avenue

line now shared by west side communities.

- Glendale City Council and Phoenix City Council must approve that agreement.

- Glendale will call for construction bids.

Glendale has been faced with problems all along the way in getting the interim project and 99th Avenue project built. The major interceptor is slated for completion by 1982. Plans have been delayed until a study of the entire county is completed to determine how much area has to be served by that line, Scanlan said.

MEANWHILE, since the interim project plans began, Phoenix has been faced with its own growth on the west side. There is less sewage capacity available than Glendale had hoped. Details are being worked out, but Glendale may have to stand ready to come up with enough funds to build a separate parallel line if Phoenix needs the interim capacity for its own use before the 99th Avenue project is complete.

The 75th Avenue interim project has been estimated at \$538,000. The 99th Avenue will be a multimillion-dollar project. Public works grant funding will mean communities have to come up with only 25 percent matching funds, instead of the entire

Sewage Station Is In Operation

By HELEN CORNELL
Gazette Correspondent

Officials of Sun City Home Owners Association appear satisfied that a sewage holding pond at 99th Avenue and Olive is under control.

The old controversial holding pond built in 1969 and sometimes called "the world's largest cess-pool" has been phased out. It was filled in with dirt removed in building a new cement based pond that has been in operation since early June.

Nobody wanted either pond, but the holding capacity is essential for Sun City until the proposed major gravity flow interceptor sewer line is completed on 99th Avenue, sometime in the 1980s.

OPERATION OF the new pond and lift station was explained to association officers and com-

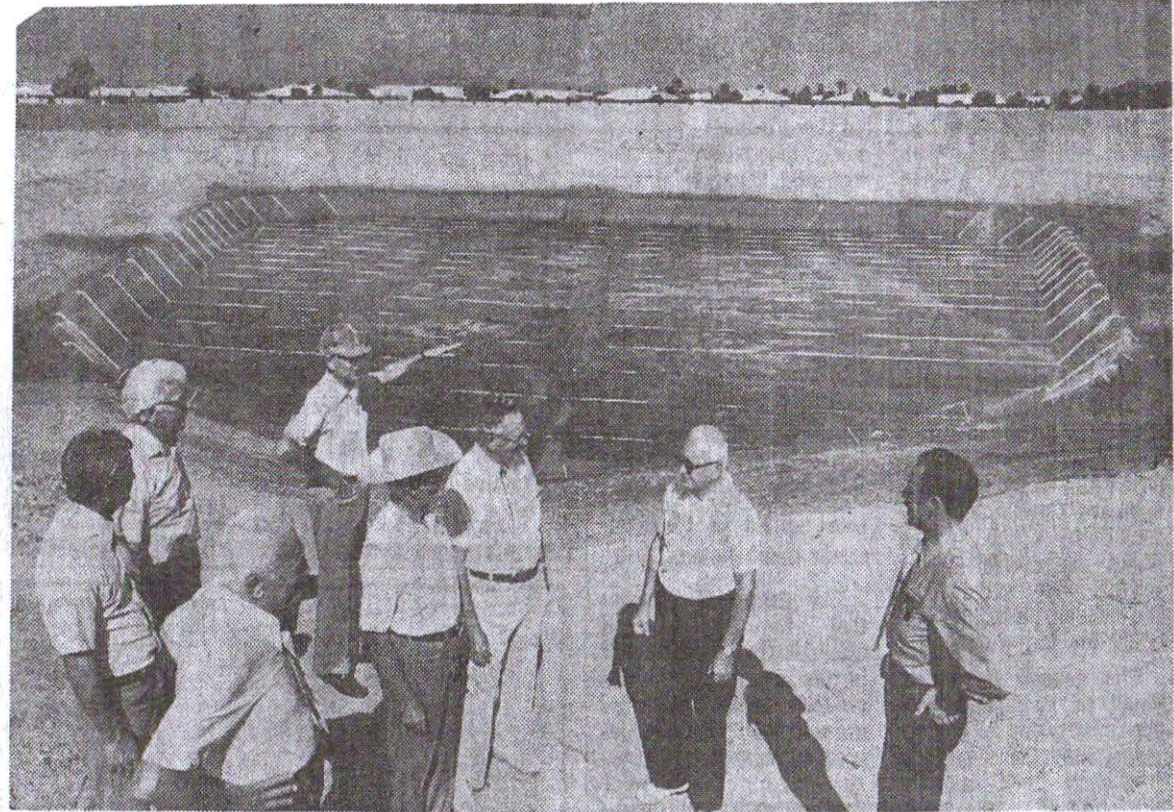
mittee members yesterday by Bill Raymo, manager of Sun City Sewer Co.

During an on-site inspection, HOA President Mike Komar told Raymo, "It does the trick. This certainly alleviates the situation we had. It's not the biggest step, but at least we have the situation under control for health conditions."

The pond was empty at 9 a.m. except for water flowing into it from a sprinkler system. At 9:16 a.m. a lift pump kicked on as sewage from Sun City flowing into a covered wet well reached a level where it would flow by gravity into the holding pond.

Raymo said the two pumps alternate operation for eight to 10 hours each day. Each is regulated to pump 2,500 gallons per minute into a line leading into Peoria's interceptor at 83rd Avenue and Northern. The line enters Glendale's outfall system at 83rd Avenue and Glendale.

THE POND is necessary to limit Sun City's volume into the line during hours of peak flow.



Gazette Staff Photo

Workings of a new cement lined sewage holding pond in Sun City at 99th Avenue and Olive drew the attention this week of officials of Sun City Home Owners Association. Bill Raymo (pointing),

manager of Sun City Sewer Co., explains sprinkler and aeration system to Marvin Collins, Paul McCluster, Ellis Danner, Mike Komar, Bob Milligan, Harold J. Henry and Don Heffelfinger.

Raymo said Sun City's peak hours are 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. daily, with a somewhat greater volume on Monday, "wash day."

The pond holds about a foot depth of sewage at peak hours, and empties by late afternoon. It is drained and washed down daily, Raymo said. Solid materials are kept in suspension. An aeration system controls odor.

The Allis-Chalmers lift

pumps activate and alternate automatically. Each is capable of pumping 4.1 million gallons of sewage per day (3,000 gallons per minute), the maximum volume forecast for Sun City.

Completion of a 75th Avenue interim project will mean approximately 2.1 mgd will be diverted from the lift station to an interceptor on 75th Avenue, reducing the volume sent through Peoria's line.

THE CEMENT lined base of the holding pond has a capacity of 800,000 gallons. However, in the event of mechanical failure anywhere in the system, the 20-foot-deep structure could hold back up to two days' volume if necessary, Raymo said.

When area residents complained about the old pond last year and funds for the 75th Avenue project were held up as a

result, Del E. Webb Development Co. offered to build the new pond and lift station. A brick wall surrounds the new facility. Raymo estimated the total cost to Webb Co. at \$310,000.

In explaining the automation of the lift station, Raymo said the company is seeking permission to install a high level alarm that will sound in the fire station at 99th Avenue and Grand Avenue.

EPA authorizes \$215,966 sewer grant

By **TIM CLARK**
Staff Writer

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Friday authorized a grant of \$215,966 to construct a part of the 75th Avenue interim sewer project.

Announcement of the grant, made jointly by Sen. Dennis DeConcini and Rep. Bob Stump,

raised the possibility that the mile-long line may be completed by early 1978.

The grant represents 75 per cent of expected construction costs. Glendale, which requested the funds and has handled the project, will be responsible for the remaining 25 per cent of \$71,989.

THE GRANT will provide partial

financing for a mile of gravity sewer line between Camelback and Indian School Road on 75th Avenue. The line will free capacity in other lines so Sun City's sewage can be transported to the treatment plant at 91st Avenue and the Salt River bottom.

Harold Goodman, Glendale's director of engineering and development, said Friday the EPA has not forwarded documents to complete processing of the grant.

He said all paperwork must be completed before Glendale can advertise for bids and schedule construction.

THE EPA grant came as the federal fiscal year closed Friday. Sources in the Valley indicated this week that the EPA hoped to

authorize the grant in the 1976-77 fiscal year rather than having it carried over to the new fiscal year.

Michael Komar, president of the Sun City Home Owners Association, commented on the EPA action: "One down and two to go."

He referred to continuing efforts to obtain federal funding for the 99th Avenue sewer project, which local officials view as the long-term solution to sewage disposal problems on the Westside.

THE PROJECT is being handled by the City of Phoenix, and 75 per cent federal funding is being sought from the EPA.

The 75th Avenue project is viewed as a short-term remedy to sewage disposal until the 99th

Avenue project can be completed sometime in the 1980s.

The EPA and the Arizona Department of Health Services first expressed interest in funding the 75th Avenue project in April 1975.

In February 1976, Glendale completed a facility plan for the project but was informed two months later that Sun City was not eligible for federal funding.

An EPA-required public hearing was held in July 1976, and some 240 Sun Citians appeared to urge the EPA to allow federal money for Sun City.

That appeal was heard, and Glendale received a design grant in December 1976. Friday's grant will finance construction of the project.

H.O.A. ASKS HELP

Congressmen get info on sewage dilemma

By **JIM CULLISON**
Staff Writer

Information outlining the 17-year history of events leading to Sun City's current sewage disposal problem has been sent to Arizona congressmen in an effort to hasten the release of federal funds for sewer line improvements.

The Home Owners Association has sent the information to Sen. Dennis DeConcini and Reps. Bob Stump and Eldon Rudd.

During an appearance by DeConcini in Sun City earlier this month, HOA officials asked him to take part in efforts to release the funding, and he indicated he would.

ELLIS DANNER, HOA director and chairman of its western Maricopa sewer and sewage disposal system committee, said the only solution to the sewage problem facing Sun City and other area communities is to install the proposed 75th Avenue line and the 99th Avenue interceptor line.

"That was the solution in 1961, and here it is 1977 and it still has not been done," he said.

"The problem is money. There

are federal funds available for this type of project. What we want to do is to get those funds moving."

DANNER, in preparing the information for release to the legislators, included copies of a recent professional journal article on Harold Cahill, head of the Environmental Protection Agency's municipal construction division, which handles federal funding for the kind of sewer project being sought.

The article conveyed a positive tone and indicated that President Carter is supporting Cahill's office and the new EPA administrator, Douglas Costle, has told Cahill to "get the program moving, get the money out."

"They've put themselves on the line," Danner said in referring to remarks in the article. "Now we are saying come forth.

"**IF WE COULD** get these funds turned loose in a month, the 75th Avenue project still could be built by the end of the year," he said.

That project would provide enough added line capacity so that the new holding pond at 99th and Olive avenues could be pumped dry every night and cleaned, he said.

Mike Komar, HOA president, said he will try to enlist support from officials in Glendale, Youngtown, Peoria, and Phoenix, asking them to contact legislators also.

All of those communities are affected by the westside sewage line problem, and Danner's committee has been working closely with Harold Goodman, Glendale director of engineering and development, in studying the problem.

"HAROLD GOODMAN has put in enough headaches, hours, and work on this to earn a gold medal," Danner commented.

In the background report sent to the legislators, Danner mentioned that Goodman does not see prospects for beginning construction on the 75th Avenue project during 1977, as was the intent, unless someone with a high level of authority directs immediate action and approval of a construction grant.

"This is the way political action takes place in this country," Danner said of the move to seek elected officials' aid. "Whoever yells loudest gets action, and we want action."

KOMAR SAID he believes DeConcini is sincerely interested in providing help on the problem and added that it also provides Rudd and Stump a chance to "ride herd" on the issue.

In the chronology prepared for the legislators, Danner stated that

the Del E. Webb Development Co. in 1961 proposed to build a sewage treatment plant for Sun City, but area governing bodies and health authorities opposed the plan, preferring installation of the 99th Avenue interceptor to the Phoenix treatment plant at 91st Avenue and the Salt River.

Webb instead built oxidation ponds near 99th and Olive to handle the sewage temporarily until the interceptor was installed.

THE TREATMENT plant for Sun City was again proposed in 1966, but opposition by area communities and the county health department forced abandonment again, Danner's report stated.

Through a laborious process, the 75th Avenue project finally received concept approval by the Environmental Protection Agency, but Danner said a health hazard exists and the need for funds to begin the construction is urgent.

He added that revisions by EPA in handling planning projects has resulted in suspension of the environmental impact statement for the 99th Avenue project, a condition he termed serious.

"Unless the 99th Avenue interceptor project moves to completion in a reasonable period of years, even with the completion of the 75th Avenue interim project, problems will arise again with overloading of the 75th Avenue line because growth in the area is bound to occur, and adequate handling of the sewage will not be provided," he said in his report.

HOA Seeks Political Influence In Construction Of Sewer Project

By Charlene Paraniuk

The Home Owners Association is pushing for political influence to get federal funding moving for the construction of the 75th Avenue Interim Sewer Project in 1977.

That action, they hope, will come from Sen. Dennis DeConcini upon his receipt of a "Schedule of Events" leading up to the present status of sewage disposal in Sun City and other westside communities. The three-page report was prepared by the HOA Western Maricopa Sewer and Sewage Disposal System Committee.

During his recent visit in Sun City, DeConcini indicated to HOA leaders his support and interest in the 75th Avenue sewer project and the ultimate 99th Avenue sewer line.

At issue, the HOA committee contends, is "foot-dragging" by the Environmental Protection Agency on delivering the necessary funding to get construction started on the 75th line.

To gain even more political momentum for pressuring EPA authorities, HOA president Mike Komar has sent letters to Phoenix Mayor Margaret Hance, Peoria Mayor Manuel Leyva, Glendale Mayor Sterling Ridge and Youngtown Mayor Norman Shrenk.

"As of this date, June 10, 1977," the report to DeConcini reads, "with several suggested changes in approach raised by EPA and the delays likely in paper processing through the EPA San Francisco office, the Glendale director of engineering (Harold

Goodman) does not see any prospect of construction getting underway to complete this urgently needed interim project during 1977 as was the intent a few months ago unless someone at a high level of authority directs that immediate action be taken...

"A serious health menace exists and local efforts since 1961 to resolve the problem have not achieved the desired results. Quick action on this interim project is essential."

As equally serious to the committee is a revised approach now requested by EPA regarding the 99th Avenue Interceptor Sewer, which is the "ultimate and adequate solution to sewage disposal in the area."

The committee noted that a recent EPA decision now requires a new level of coordination and reorganization of 201 planning projects in the Phoenix metropolitan area. This, they said, necessitates redoing the Facility Plan for the 99th Avenue Project and has resulted in suspension of work on the Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

"Unless the 99th Avenue project moves to completion in a reasonable period of years," the committee said, "even with the completion of the 75th Avenue Interim Project, problems will arise again with overloading of the 75th Avenue line."

The report said this would occur because of growth in the area.

If EPA funding does not come through quick enough, Del E. Webb Development Company

engineering vice president Tom Ryan indicated recently, the 75th Avenue line would have to be built with local funds.

"It appears," Ryan explained, "that the EPA is dragging its feet. We can't wait. The need for the sewage line is now."

DEVCO, he said, would pay for Sun City's share—approximately \$180,000.

Ellis Danner, HOA committee chairman, pointed out also, however, "The key point is that the money for the funding eventually comes from the people in the area anyway. This was our argument last summer.

"The solution here is getting the federal funding. We pay more than our share of taxes; therefore, we're entitled to get a little consideration back on the billions of dollars of federal funds being spent for these types of projects," Danner continued.

"This," he asserted, "is the only way federal funding can help Sun City. Sun City does not qualify nor need the federal funding provided in other areas such as low-cost housing.

"If we could break funds loose this month," he remarked, "we could get the interim project finished in 1977. Then we could pump the holding pond on 99th and Olive dry every day.

"The ultimate solution, of course, is the 99th Avenue trunk line which will eliminate the pond completely." But Danner said delays in the 75th Avenue line only delay building of the 99th Avenue line to even further away.