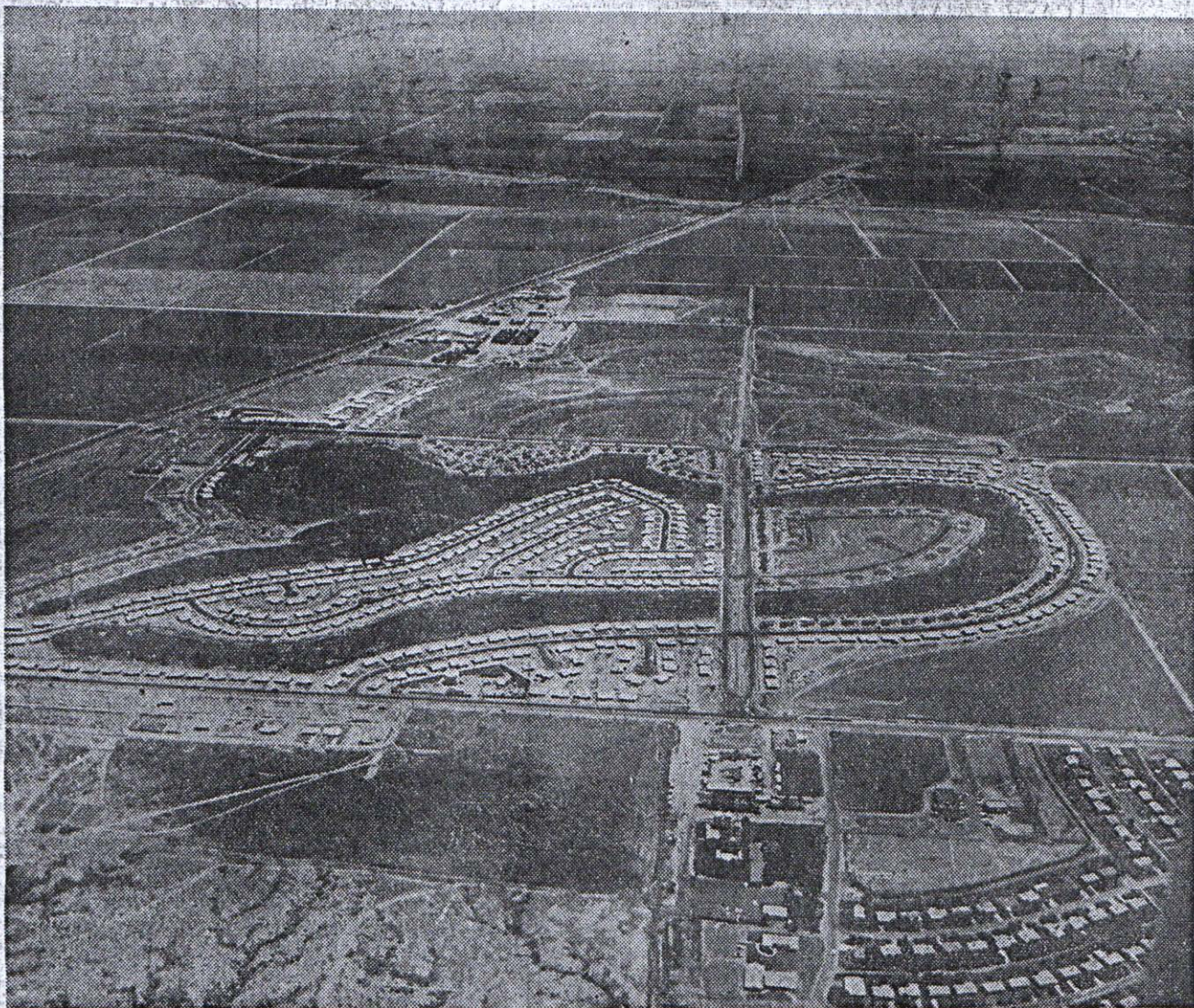


Real Estate and Development



GROWTH RAPID AT SUN CITY

Air view shows mushrooming Sun City, the new Del E. Webb retirement community 12 miles northwest of Phoenix, where more than 850 homes have been sold and the first 575 will be completed and occupied by mid-summer. Photo shows new homes encircling the first nine holes of the 18-hole all-grass golf course. Shopping Center, HiwayHouse, and community

and recreation center are at left-center of picture, and Phoenix-Wickenburg highway (U.S. 60-70-89) runs from left diagonally toward upper right. The Webb Construction Co. has started second segment of 675 homes just above those already erected which will circle the second nine holes of the golf course.

—The Phoenix Gazette—

Jan

New S.C. Models Open Today

The residents grand opening of Sun City's new model homes and apartments continues to-day, Thursday until 4:30 p.m.

Winners of the questionnaires drawing will be announced to-morrow Friday at 10:00 a.m. at the Sales and Information office. Winners need not be present to win. The prizes include cash gift certificates of \$50, \$100, and \$200. The certificates are redeemable in either of the Sun City Shopping Centers.

Donuts and coffee are being served throughout the day and entertainment includes strolling Mariachis.

The Public Grand Opening is to begin Sunday, Jan. 23 and continue throughout the week. It will include resident participation by the officers and board members and their wives and husbands of the Home Owners Association, Town Hall and the Sun City Civic Association will serve as host and hostesses, in the models and Town Hall area.

The Town Hall residents have offered their full cooperation and will have the lounge, club rooms, arts and crafts rooms and the hall itself bustling with activity.

Traffic to the models will be guided by the sheriff's department, from Bell Road and Grand Avenue up both 107 and 103rd Avenues to Peoria Avenue. Outgoing traffic will be routed to Peoria and Olive Avenues. Parking will be available at the site of the new amphitheater on the southwest corner of 107th and in the Plaza Del Sol Shopping Center parking lot.

According to Del E. Webb Development Co., sales manager, Dick Dodson, the new units offer larger closets, wide carports, new light fixtures, electronic air filters, fiberglass tubs and showers, and numerous other innovations. He pointed out some of the attractive features in Sun City's newly developing area are underground utilities, well-lighted streets, and wide landscaped parkways.

"We are enthusiastic about the community future growth" said vice-president and project manager, T.P. Kohl. He continued, "This is not solely due to our present development and future plans, Sun City pioneer residents are maintaining the established section with meticulous care. Many

Continued on page 2

New Models

Continued from page 1
of the new units will border on Sun City's third golf course now under construction, and scheduled for opening this fall. Facilities include the Sun City amphitheater and civic center scheduled for spring opening, and a banquet facilities which are now on the drawing board for the King's Inn Motel at Sun City's entrance.

"We expect several thousands of visitors during the next week," said Kohl. "Tourism is higher than ever this year in Arizona, and many people will be drawn to the Valley by our own direct and National advertising and publicity campaign. Last year more than 70 thousand packets of Sun City literature were mailed to people throughout the country."

NO HILLS TO CLIMB

40 The Home
6-1-70

Retirees 'Growing' Lawns of Concrete

Story and Photos
 By BRUCE ELLISON
 Daily News Staff Writer

SUN CITY, Ariz.—If you're over 50, have an income of about \$9,000 a year, and want to retire in a warm climate, consider this geriatric paradise of concrete lawns and clubby people.

Created in 1959 by developer Del W. Webb, Sun City has grown dramatically from 4,500 residents in 1963 to an estimated 17,000 today.

There is little yard work or maintenance to interfere with pleasure. Many residents buy co-op or condominium apartments, with all outside yard work taken care of—an important factor when summer temperatures can reach 115 degrees.

Others opt for "concrete" lawns, made of green dyed crushed rock, held in place with epoxy cement.

None of the residents apparently lacks for activity either.

"It's not what do we do," says Mrs. Blake Stewart, a former Daytonian now living here, "but how can we find the time to do it all?"

"All winter long on the golf course, people turned to me and asked 'aren't we lucky to be out here while the poor folks up north are shoveling snow?'"

Golf—on one of five flat courses—is only one attraction. Sun City sports tennis, shuffleboard, five swimming pools, lawn bowling on an immaculate green, miniature golf, and shuffleboard. All are open to residents only on payment of a \$20 annual membership fee.

A Foursome or Fishing?

In addition, there are 130 clubs offering almost continuous activities, from bridge to

DAYTON DAILY NEWS

Home & Family

Friday, May 14, 1971

Page 35

leather tooling, and even fishing in a man-made, well stocked lake.

Add three shopping centers, with a fourth under construction, a new hospital, eight churches with more a-building, a country club, movie theatre, and the Sun Bowl, an outdoor grass-seat amphitheater offers programs by Gordon MacRae, Lawrence Welk, and Guy Lombardo.

Sun City has been developed in phases as the idea of retirement communities caught on.

Phase I, the oldest part started in 1959, served as a kind of model for the rest of the development, and for others in Florida and California.

"We originally got retired secretaries and railroad pensioners," says Al Pote, a public relations spokesman for the Webb organization.

"Nowdays, though, we get retiring doctors, lawyers, bank presidents and other professional people. We even have a couple of millionaires that I know of."

Increasing home prices, due to spiraling construction costs, may be one reason.

Houses in the original development sold for as little as \$8,000 11 years ago. The 19

models now on display start at \$21,000 and range up to \$49,990.

Average income of residents, Pote says, is \$8,900 annually.

Cars, homes and all shopping and other indoor facilities are air-conditioned. And the developer has improved the community as it has grown, adding, for example, underground utilities and sloping sidewalks convenient for golf carts in the newer areas.

One amenity not yet popular is cable TV, familiar in Ohio. Here, each house sprouts its own antenna.

Growth of the community has brought a few problems, too. Although there is no crime in the streets, parking is getting to be a hassle, Sun Citians admit.

One reason is that few older residents like to walk far, especially in the summer heat. Parking around the recreation complexes is extremely crowded.

To help out, special spaces marked "for Handicapped only" have been marked off nearest the recreation entrances.

It's Cow Country

Sun Citians are also doing court battle with a cattle feedlot that occasionally produces a disagreeable odor in older parts of town.

The Spur Feeding Company, about a half-mile away, established its feedlot before Sun City was developed and contends it should be able to continue in business. The Webb firm won its initial court skirmish, having the feedlot declared a public nuisance.

*Average income is
\$8,900 annually . . .
there are no Negroes
live here.*

sance, but the cattle operators are appealing to the Arizona supreme court.

Sales of homes here are limited to people over 50, says PR man Pote, even though he concedes such discrimination may be illegal under the Civil Rights laws.

"Of course, there are no schools here—that's one reason why taxes are low—so the place isn't really attractive to younger people with children," he explained.

Although a few Negroes have visited the community on company-sponsored sales trips, none have settled here.

"We don't discriminate, let me make that very clear," Pote said. "This is a large, nationwide company, and we couldn't get away with it if we wanted to.

"But," adds Pote, "economics may be a factor in explaining the absence of Negroes."

Babies, Beware

Another of Sun City's facilities not geared to youth is the brand-new 200-room Boswell Memorial hospital.

Boswell has excellent geriatric care facilities, but when a baby was born there a few weeks ago, it was quickly transferred to a Phoenix hospital where it could get "more adequate facilities for its care."

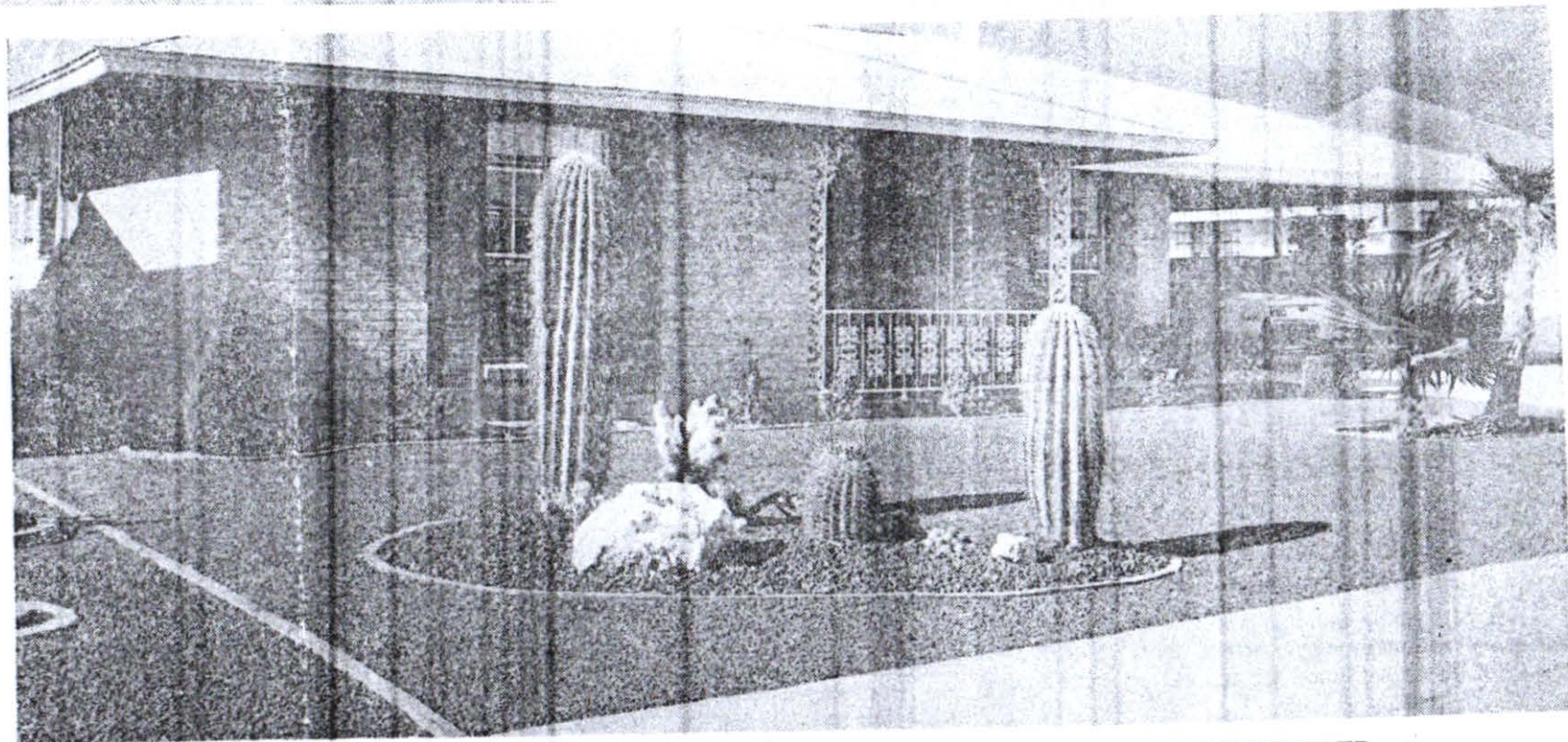
Sun Citians learn of the community mostly from their friends, Pote says, a viewpoint confirmed by the Stewarts.

Mrs. Stewart, who used to live at 3117 Southern Blvd., says she heard of Sun City from friends, came out for a visit five years ago, and liked the place.

"Two years ago last June," Mrs. Stewart said, "we decided we'd better get out of Dayton because we were getting too old. The hills at the golf course were getting hard to climb, and we didn't like the snow.

"So we moved out and figured if we didn't like it, we'd move back to Dayton and rent an apartment.

"Well, we're going back to Dayton in June, but only for a visit. We like living here. It's easy living, a little like a continuous vacation."

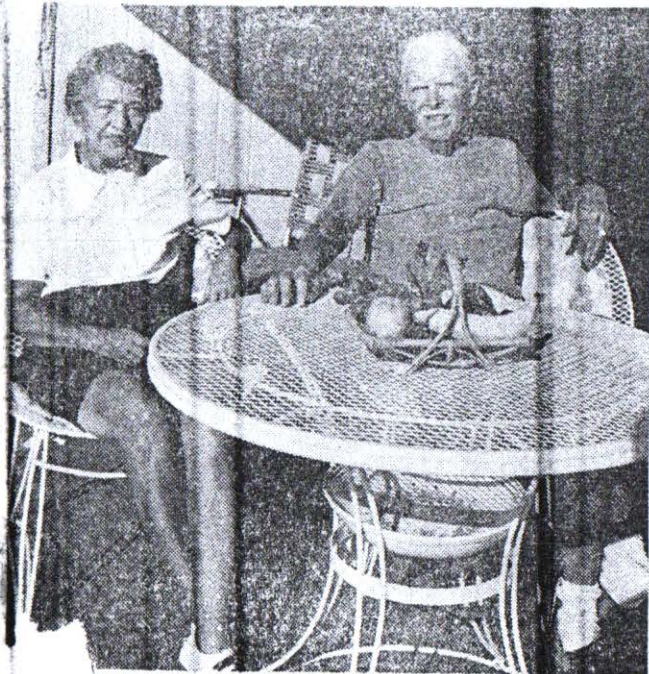


SUN CITY HOMES, RANGING FROM \$21,000 TO ALMOST \$50,000, ARE DESERT LANDSCAPED
Lawn Here Is Made of Green Limestone and Epoxy Cement, Requires No Mowing

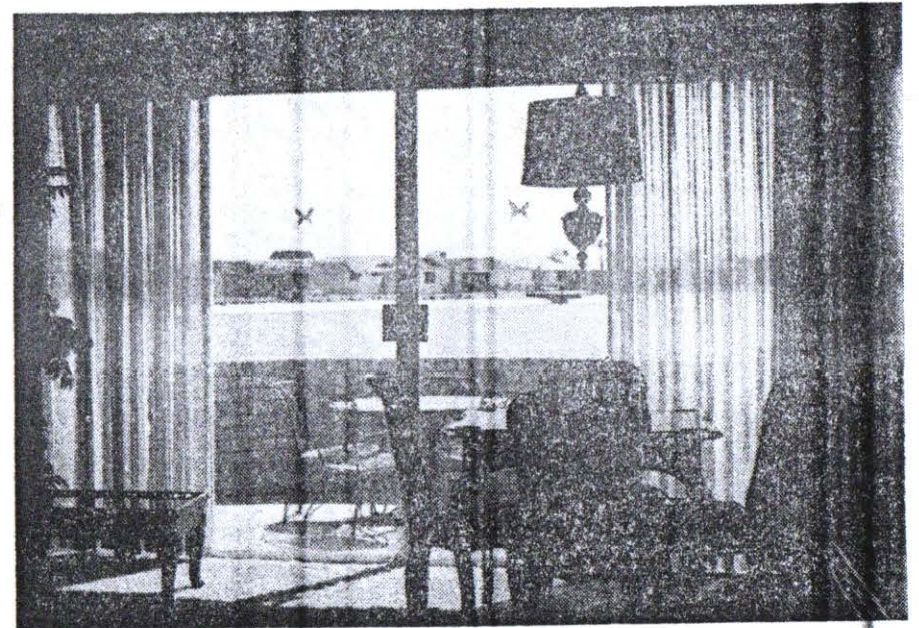
Nowadays we attract retiring doctors, lawyers, bank presidents . . . even a couple millionaires?



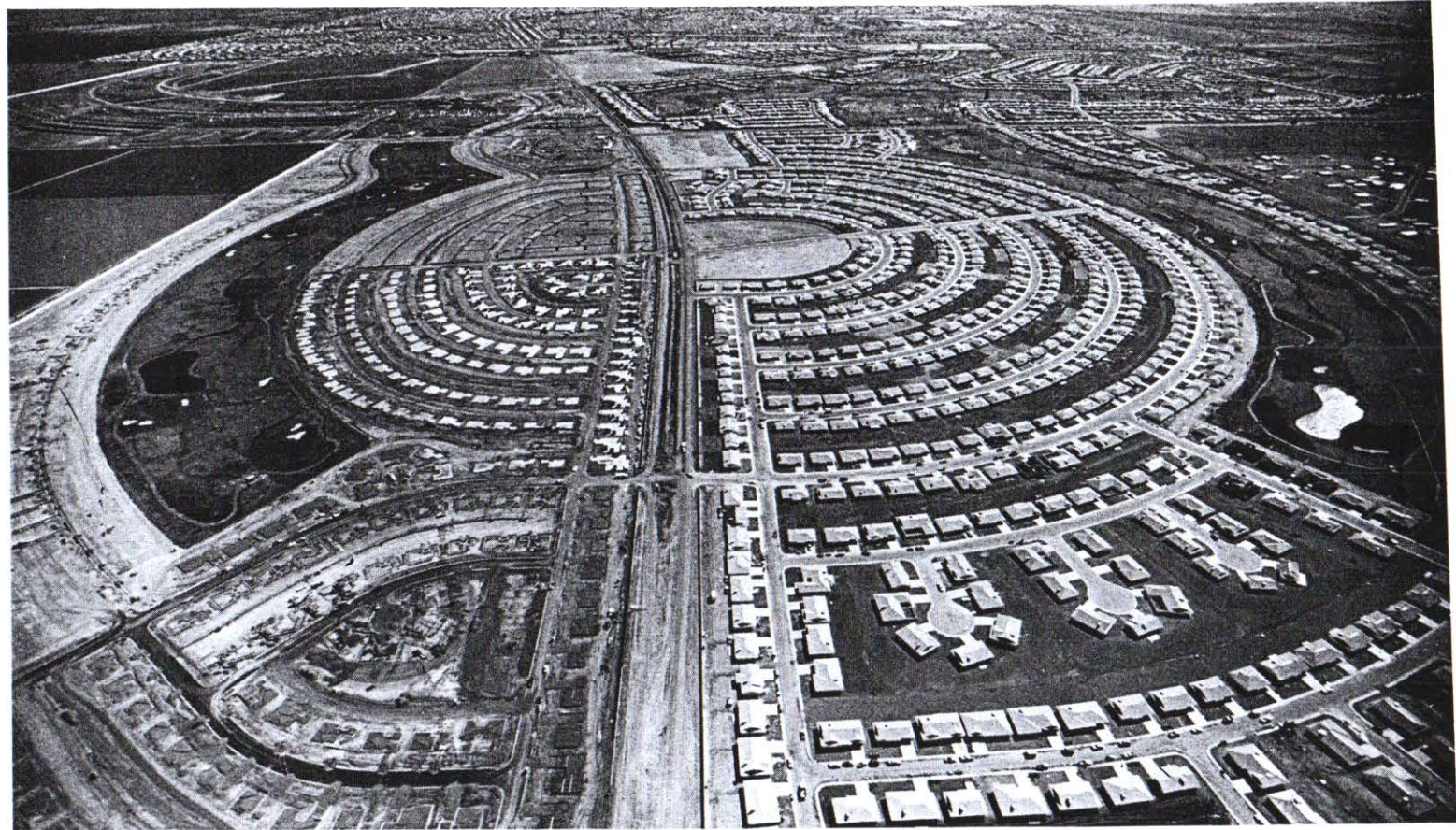
MINIATURE GOLF
It's AstroTurf



STEWARTS RELAX ON THEIR PATIO
Former Daytonians Play Flat Golf Courses



DINING ROOM IN MODEL HOME LOOKS OUT ON LAKE
Wide Doors, Decorated With Butterflies, Open Onto Patio



This aerial photograph was taken looking south from Sun City's northern boundary (Beardsley Road). Meandering green area at left is the new Union Hills Country Club, the community's tenth golf course. Home construction continues at fifty per week.

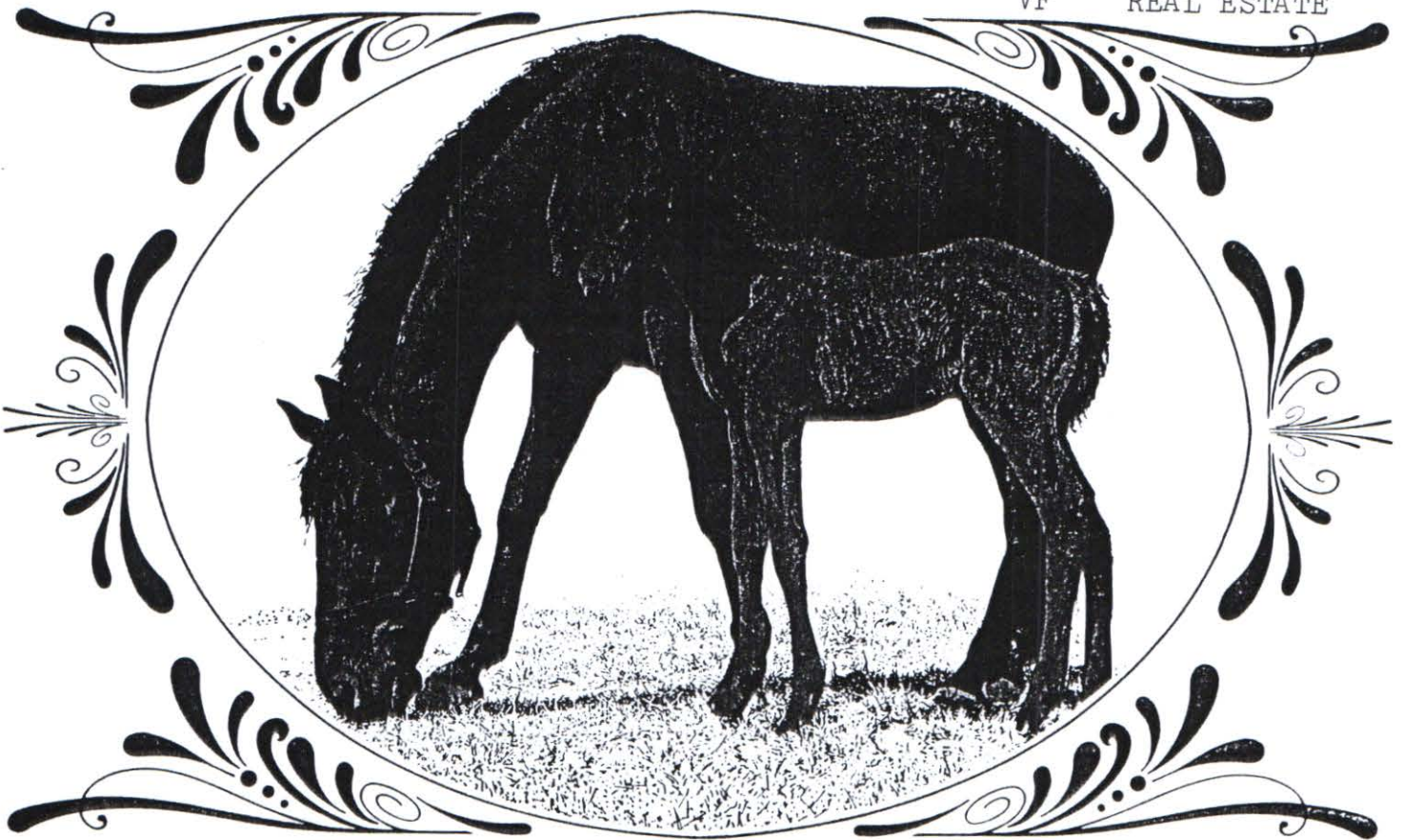
SUN CITY HOME SALES ON RECORD PACE

Sun City home sales continue on a record pace with the sale of 1801 homes valued at approximately \$75 million through March 28. In addition, Webb's Resale Department has recorded 242 sales.

To meet the demand, housing construction was increased to 50 units per week. Webb President John W. Meeker attributes the spiraling sales to a three-year backlog of prospects waiting for an improved economy. Also, many winter visitors are getting their first look at Sun City's Heritage Collection of 21 model homes, the community's 10th golf course and the 27-acre, \$5

million Bell Recreation Center, which offers a glittering array of recreational and hobby facilities, plus a 40,000 volume library.

"With thousands of people retiring early on substantial pensions and other income sources, we see a continuing positive trend," Meeker said. "The Valley has several major assets, two of which are ideal winter weather and Sun City, the largest, best-known retirement community in the country. As a major tourist attraction, this unique city of 40,000 has already drawn nearly 125,000 visitors this year."



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 - Must build in rear of home . . . not in front or side yard
 - 1,200 sq. ft. of corral per horse required
 - Corral must be minimum of 10 feet from rear or side property line
 - Building permit required
7. Del Webb will build any current model home (no building except a single family residential dwelling) on your site at same price as on price information sheet.



For further information, contact:

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 SUN CITY, ARIZONA 85372
 TELEPHONE (602) 933-0173

DEL WEBB'S
Sun City

See a lot in Rancho Estates today...11th Avenue just south of Peoria Avenue

SC realty board boasts accomplishments

By MIKE GARRETT
Financial Editor

Sun City Area Board of Realtors President Charlotte Byrne feels she has accomplished her chief goals this year of establishing better lines of communication and giving the board a higher community profile.

The three-year-old Sun City board has a long list of accomplishments this year. It has come a long way since it was first chartered and compiled its own Multiple Listing Service book.

"I really feel we now have the highest caliber and intellect of realtors on this board, I bet, of any board in the United States," said Mrs. Byrne, who will step down as president Nov. 13 to be replaced by her present "right-hand man" Bob Bell of Del E. Webb Home Realty.

"These people out here have all been successful in their lives. I really feel strongly about that. I would put 'em up against anybody.

"People who come here have been involved with business," she added. "They know ethics and know what's ethical—they believe in the golden rule. They also really have the experience, the know-how and how a corporation works and how big business works.

"Of course some of the ladies haven't worked before, but basically, they've done their time and realize what is important and do the right thing. If there are any problems, usually it's from ignorance."

While she thinks the caliber of Sun City realtors is first rate,



CHARLOTTE BYRNE

Mrs. Byrne still wanted to establish closer ties with the Sun City community and with realty boards around the Valley and state.

All indications are that has been accomplished.

The Bud Melcher and Associates Sun City office manager the past four years and 1983 Sun City Realtor of the Year mentioned several accomplishments reflecting that goal.

"Communication is always the key. Last year they (the Arizona Association of Realtors) had a president's indoctrination which we attended and will attend again this year. We have leadership conferences in December

and a legislative conference, too. In fact our board has been extremely vocal and caring. When they have something coming up we do participate.

"In March we had Private Property Week sponsored by the National Association of Realtors (NAR). We don't have a private property week like what they do in a lot of other places because a lot of it is the realtors going into an area to clean up or choose some homes for cleanup. There is so much pride in ownership here, you don't really need that.

"But we had a private property essay contest with Dysart School." She noted the Dysart student who wrote the top essay

also captured the state competition and is eligible for the national grand prize at the NAR convention Nov. 7-12.

In another school-related gesture, the Sun City board recently handed out 810 Safety through Song kits to area schools.

"In March we also had our first President's Round Table honoring the top 15 sales people, the top sales team and commercial salesmen. I was very pleased with that."

Mrs. Byrne also thinks the quality of speakers at the monthly board meetings at the Lakes Club has improved.

"Every month a different office is responsible for the speaker. So when it comes their turn they really want to get somebody who is informative and top notch," said Mrs. Byrne.

She added that the well-known speakers in turn have been impressed with the Sun City board meetings and turnouts.

Another top priority this year was getting full-time hired help for the board. When the board was first formed, Mrs. Byrne, as then secretary-treasurer, said she had no help in paying bills, collecting dues, writing letters for the 275-300 members.

"Knowing we needed help and seeing other boards operate I felt the most important thing we needed was to get an executive vice president, somebody who is hired and really coordinates everything.

"All of us are volunteers and we're trying to do other jobs. A good many of those on the execu-

tive staff are managers and being a sales person and to also be involved with the board is a lot," said Mrs. Byrne.

As it turned out, she felt the two administrators hired by the board, Jack Martin and Donna Delloso were perfect for the executive vice president and assistant's jobs.

"The next thing that we did—something that has been in the wind for a long time—was signing an affirmative marketing agreement which really means fair housing and equal opportunity."

That meant meeting certain HUD fair housing requirements.

Mrs. Byrne also related how the board has fine tuned its committees and decision-making procedures, making sure that every company and office has a voice on the board.

"Our education committee seems to be the top committee every year because it's such a big job. We've had three people on the education committee who have been outstanding—chairman David Compton, Coldwell Banker, vice chairman Carol Sandy, Century 21 and Otis Lipps of Del Webb Home Realty."

Mrs. Byrne, a Sun City West resident and Kansas City native who has been in the real estate business for 20 years, stressed that continuing education for license renewal among Sun City realtors is an important service the board provides.

"Another thing we did was revise our bylaws which have to be approved by the National As-

sociation of Realtors."

New Multiple Listing Service rules and regulations were also adopted.

She also noted progress was made in further tightening controls and protection of the lock-box key system the Sun City realtors use.

As for future plans, "we know we have to expand. We started in a little tiny office we shared with the Youngtown Co-op. Then we moved over to the old Red Carpet office on California Avenue. One tenant there is moving out so we're opening that up.

"We'll have our weekly listing exchange meetings there which we had to postpone because we didn't have any place to hold it. We'll have our continuing education classes in our board office now.

"We're also developing plans to computerize our Multiple Listing Service System similar to what Phoenix has. That will be sometime in mid-1986."

What about her future role on the board?

"They don't really put us out to pasture. This year John Tift, a past president automatically (if he's willing and able) is a director with the Arizona Association of Realtors. You are automatically an AAR director as the president. But then we are allowed three AAR directors, the past president plus two people. So I'll be staying on as an AAR director. I've also been asked to be on the education committee for the state.

"It's fun and very challenging. It keeps the juices going."

Area Realtors encouraged by 1988 sales

First of two parts
By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun Cities real estate market is moving at a brisk pace, but sales are not at the level they were a year ago.

"The fact of the matter is the market is down 17 percent in terms of the units sold over the last 12 months," said Sun City Area Board of Realtors President-elect Ron Smith, owner-broker of Mull Realty. "However, it is at 1986 levels so it really isn't all that bad; 1987 was just an awfully good year."

Ken Meade Realty owner-broker Ken Meade broke those figures down further, noting Sun City condominium sales are off about 34 percent and single-family home sales are off nearly 15 percent from last year.

The Big Three Sun City area Realtors say their summer sales have been steady or showed an increase. They look for a strong fall showing after the November elections. It's the smaller Realtor companies who apparently have been suffering with slow sales.

"I think that the (Sun City)

market is going to be strong beginning right after the election all the way through spring," said Smith. "Actually, we're showing signs of strength right now over a year ago. There are more people and more activity, more looking and more buyers."

"Those houses that are priced within the marketplace and are in good condition are still selling," he said.

Bud Melcher broker George Watrous, the board's vice president and sole candidate for president-elect, said the recently passed Equal Housing Bill will help future sales because it should allow Sun City to maintain its retirement community status based on its age group percentage. Sales will also be helped by Consumer Guide's ranking of Sun City. The magazine ranked Sun City third among retirement communities in Sun Belt states in terms of criteria such as climate, cost of living, community services and health care.

"I think that between six and 18 months down the road, Sun City is going to get a tremen-

dous leg up on other retirement communities, which must have 80 percent of their residents age 55 or over in order to qualify for age restrictions," said Watrous.

There are now 1,477 single-family and condominium listings in the Sun City market area, according to the board's most recent Multiple Listing Service (MLS) figures. That's a listing rate of about 4 percent of total area homes and is 400 more units than were on the market a year ago, Smith said. But Watrous noted there are considerably more homes in the marketplace now.

The Arizona Regional MLS, consisting of Realtor boards in Phoenix, Glendale, Scottsdale, Mesa-Chandler-Tempe, Carefree-Cave Creek and Casa Grande, could offer no comparable listing percentages.

Arizona Regional MLS spokesman Bob Kundreth said the region's 26,322 listings were only 100 more than last September's figure. His assistant, Susie Janeck, said regional listings usually run within 800-1,000 of the 26,000 figure.

Watrous characterized the

Valley as a buyer's market where prices have to be competitive because of the number of listings. That also holds true in Sun City, especially with the condominium situation where values have dropped a whopping 8.2 percent over last year.

"There are still too many people who say, well I should get a 5 percent increase in the value of my house per year just because it's there," said Watrous. "When you price it that way, you get to keep it. You've got to do a competitive analysis and that's where a capital professional Realtor will come in and show you what the market is."

"In our marketplace we have a tremendous advantage for comparable listings. Because it is a pioneer development we have set models with standard square footage, standard features and it's very easy to adjust up or down for the standard features in accordance to improvements made or needed."

The value of Sun City area homes continues a recent trend — up for Sun City West and down for Sun City. Smith said Sun City West single-family

homes in the last 12 months have shown about a 2½ percent increase in value while Sun City homes have declined slightly. The current average price of a Sun City West single-family home is \$115,000. The figure is \$75,600 in Sun City. Average overall is \$87,700.

Watrous stressed that Realtors will continue to work closely with the Sun City Ambassadors to help promote the area and keep values up, since both have similar goals.

This summer's Sun City marketplace apparently wasn't as bad as some Realtors thought it was going to be.

John O'Keefe, owner-broker of O'Keefe Real Estate/Better Homes and Gardens, said he was happy with his summer "because it was better than I expected. We had the second-best August we've ever had."

"I thought considering everything, we had an excellent summer and I don't see anything out there to indicate that it shouldn't be a good winter either."

O'Keefe said if there is a

recession out there, it's in the Phoenix marketplace because out-of-state home buyers are still coming into the Sun City area and spending money.

Noting the 17 percent overall dropoff, Meade was especially happy with his summer sales, which he said show only eight fewer sales than last year for his Sun City office and one more sale for his Sun City West office.

"I can't really complain in the face of declining prices and sluggish sales. If the 17 percent figure is true, then I'm tickled to death where I am at."

"I see a pickup with September already. We're just going to keep moving right along. I think this fall will be as good as last fall and probably as good as any we've had," said Meade.

Smith said Mull Realty showed a 20 percent sales increase over last summer but noted that could be attributed in part to the company's merger with Area West Realty early this year.

Next: How the Realtors look at Sun City's declining rental market.

Realtors: Restrictions bring on vacancies

Second of two parts
By MIKE GARRETT
News Sun staff

SUN CITY — Rental restrictions in the Sun Cities have led to higher condominium vacancy rates and lower values and sales, say Sun City Area Board of Realtors executives.

"Sun City condos have had the worst depreciation in a year I can remember," said board President-elect Ron Smith of Mull Realty. "Overall values are down 8.2 percent. What happens is anytime you take a property right like rentals away from somebody, you reduce your market."

The Realtors note that most Sun City area residents rented their properties before buying. They say if they're not encouraged to rent on a trial basis, they likely won't buy. That may be one reason why total sales are down 17 percent from a year ago and condo sales are off 34 percent.

Smith, board Vice President George Watrous, Tri-Star Realty owner-broker Ken Plein and

O'Keefe/Better Homes and Gardens Rental Department manager Jack Driver place most of the blame for the reduced rentals and lower property values on what the group calls the anti-rental, anti-pet attitude of the Sun City-Sun City West condominium associations.

To a lesser extent, they say, the Recreation Centers of Sun City are also discouraging renters by their recreation card restrictions.

"Every time you put a restriction on, it's like a pyramid," said Watrous. "Normally 50 percent of the available buyers will look at your property. For every restriction you add, you reduce the number of buyers who will look at your property."

"I'm not so sure that's the sole reason for the (condos) value going down," said Smith. "Value is going down also because of supply and demand, and there are a lot of them on the market right now. A lot of folks who chose the condo style of living in the past have now reached the age where they're going into all

the care centers in the area.

"The market dictates the price of a rental. It's an open and free market here and the Realtors are not setting those rental rates. They are set by what somebody is willing to pay."

Smith and Plein said the condo restrictions have virtually eliminated the investor as a buyer or the future retiree who wants to buy now, occupy later and rent it out in the interim.

"I would say that as a ballpark figure, probably 20 percent of the condo market goes to investors," said Watrous. "If you remove 10 to 20 percent of your market, you now have an excess supply. Supply increases, demand decreases, value drops."

Driver elaborated on the rental situation at the board's September breakfast meeting Sept. 15.

A Sun City resident since 1972, Driver has served on the executive boards of the Sun City Home Owners Association, Taxpayers Association and the Board of Realtors and was instrumental in organizing the

Multiple Listing Service book.

Because the number and value of units rented are both down, Driver said he thought some condominium association presidents are starting to soften their stances. "I think they've turned around now and realized the mistakes they've made on this anti-renting thing."

But Plein said he knew of three condominium areas where rental restrictions have dropped unit prices 20 percent to 25 percent.

"Probably 15 of that 25 percent drop is due to the rental restrictions."

Plein estimated that of the 385 Sun City area condominiums, 30 to 35 condo groups now have a rental restriction.

"The chalets off of 98th Avenue and Thunderbird have had dramatic price reductions. Two-bedroom units that sold in the upper 40s are now selling in the upper 30s. That's documented in the multiple listing book.

"Another area very hard hit are the garden patio apartments

below Peoria Avenue in Phase I between 103rd and 107th Avenues," said Plein. "Four or five condo groups in there have enacted rental restrictions and they have seen comparable one-bedroom units that sold in the high 30s now drop in price to the high 20s or low 30s.

"The third area that has been devastated is the one-bedroom condominiums across from Rancho Estates on 111th Avenue below Peoria down to Olive. There are like 20 for-sale signs in that area and the properties have dropped from the low 40s to the low 30s. Those are very desirable apartments."

Plein said condominium buyers, especially those who live in the unit only three months or want to move into a life care facility, no longer have rental options.

He said some of the condominium associations have enacted legislation giving landlords three years to remove their tenants and eventually sell the property. He has had several

such properties on the market.

Plein said most owner-landlords are willing to serve on the condominium boards. "The condominiums create this impression that the board does so much and the tenant is a subservient person and they do not want the tenant on the board."

Plein said the number of rentals he owns in Sun City has dropped from 26 to 16. Since March, he has lost \$2,400 on one of his units with no sale in sight.

Driver also said pet owners should be catered to, not discouraged by condominium associations, since one out of three Sun Citians has a pet.

Driver said renters would also be encouraged more if the recreation centers would pro-rate their cards to renters on a monthly basis instead of make them buy one for a whole year.

Driver also thinks cheaper rents will add to the area's rental problem.

"We bring customers into the community to make buyers, not renters out of them," he said.

'Millionaires' condos fetch cutrate prices

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Back when there was a waiting list to get into Fairway Court East condominiums, they used to call the complex "Millionaires' Row."

But now vacancies are at a record high and prices are lower than they've been in more than a decade.

Some say the problem comes down to pets. Or, more precisely, the lack of pets, since Fairway Court East doesn't allow them. And that prohibition against pets, written into the condominium board's rules three

years ago, could be discouraging some potential buyers.

And if several residents and condominium group officers at Fairway Court East are representative of other owners, nothing's going to change their minds about pets, even if it would mean attracting new neighbors.

That's despite the fact that 60-unit Fairway Court East has 10 vacancies, the highest in its 25-year history. In that respect, Fairway Court East isn't much different from the rest of Sun City's condominium market. In early November there were 556

condominiums on the market in Sun City, nearly a two-year supply, according to the Sun City Multiple Listing Service book.

That presents a real problem for real estate firms trying to sell Sun City condominiums with pet restrictions.

Sun Town Realty agent Jeanne Lewis said she has lost at least six sales at Fairway Court East because of the pet prohibition.

"People had a little poodle or whatever for 10 or 12 years and (getting rid of the pet to meet the restrictions would be) ...

like throwing the kids out to them," Lewis said.

Several Sun City realtors are holding an open house today and Sunday at Fairway to try to drum up interest in selling the condominiums.

Fairway residents understand the value of a pet to many elderly retirees, condominium chairman Bill Rietberg said. And at least one resident, Charlotte Fairley, still has her 13-year-old pet poodle, grandfathered in when pet restrictions were imposed about three years ago.

But as Rietberg said, "I'm one

of the new kids on the block and the function of this condo is enjoying the golf on South course."

Long-time Fairway resident Fairley said, "The pet business is not good here. I'm the only one who has one."

All the residents who talked about the pet problem agreed it was not the pets so much as the people who didn't take care of them by letting them out unattended.

"We used to have cats around here and they drove me crazy. One jumped on my dog once and

See Condo,A4

Condo vacancies set record high

— From A1

brother did I raise thunder," Fairley said.

The group also is adamant about controlling renters.

"I don't believe in rentals, I never will and that's it," Fairley said.

Rietberg said his condominium group is more lenient toward renters than some others, but it still has to draw the line.

"We're not just being arbitrary," Rietberg said. "The tax base can go sky high. I don't think too many people are aware of the fact that Maricopa County only allows a percentage of rentals for condominiums. After you rent a certain percentage of your units, the entire complex is then taxed (higher) as an apartment complex rather than as a condominium."

Rietberg said Fairway has three renters, all hardships allowed because the owners of those condominiums are living in nursing homes while trying to sell their homes.

She said the condominium is one of those rare works of construction in Sun City not built by Del Webb. The 1,200-square-foot golf course condominiums were built in 1962 and 1963 as a resort-like facility for golfers.

As they say in real estate, location is everything. And Fairway has "location."

Resident Ruth Gruenhagen said, "I can walk over to the shopping center and we have a nearby library and swimming pool."

That location was a big draw in the early days of the condominium complex. Lewis said, "People were lined up on a sheet

of paper to get in here. But most of the original residents have now died or left Sun City and the new crowd coming in has no idea what these places are. We just want to put the place back on the map and make people cognizant of what they are."

Aune Keith, Fairway board secretary, said, "The reason we have so many vacancies is because people have reached that age where they have moved to be near family or have died."

Fairley said, "They used to call it Millionaire's Row. Two years ago people were still looking for a place to buy down here. All of a sudden it changed."

— So have the prices.

The two-bedroom Fairway condominiums are now selling for less than \$50,000 and the one-bedrooms for just under \$40,000, Lewis said.

She and Rietberg said that in 1986 and 1987 some units were selling for as high as \$60,400 and most were still above \$50,000 only a year ago.

"But I don't think easing the rental restrictions or allowing pets would help in any way," Rietberg said. "The concept of these units is to play golf all winter and come summertime you're on your way. Everything else is taken care of. All you do is lock your door."

Do the Fairway residents who were interviewed have any solutions to the problem? They all agreed Sun City's Phase I (the area south of Grand Avenue and the oldest part of the community) will have to attract younger residents.



FILLING VACANCIES — Sun Town Realty agent Jeanne Lewis thinks the attractive 60-unit Fairway East condominiums adjacent to

the South Golf Course on 105th Avenue should be able to attract plenty of buyers if it weren't for pet restrictions.

"I don't think it's all black or white," said Rietberg, who describes himself as one of Phase I's younger retirees. "In my view the reason for the downturn in real estate values here is that

Phase I is now moving out and it's just empty. They all came in at once and now they're all going out at once. We're going to go out the same way, feet first. At that time in another 15 to 20

years, you'll have the same situation."

"We were all young when we came here," Fairley said. "My husband retired when he was in his 40s."

News—Sun

Condo project set for Sun City expansion

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Ryerson Co. cleared the last major obstacle Thursday to begin Phase II of its Ryerson-Heritage luxury retirement condominiums.

At about the same time, the Marriott Corp. announced plans for its Brighton Gardens catered-living community just west of the Heritage project.

The two projects will be tied together to form a complete lifestyle continuum from independent to nursing home care.

The Ryerson Co. received unanimous approval of the Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Commission Thursday to amend its zoning ordinance for a 9.2-acre site on the southeast corner of Palmeras Drive and Boswell Boulevard, north of Sun Shadow Square Shopping Center at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

Ryerson requested R-3 zoning that allows special use for a residential care facility.

"The Phase II approval is tied to the Marriott program," said Denny Ryerson, president of the Ryerson Co., which built the Phase I Ryerson-Heritage condominiums at 17404 N. 99th Ave. "It gives us our next phase and a multi-level continuum of care unit."

Once the entire project is complete, it will have independent living (condominiums for purchase already operating in Phase I), catered living, assisted living, personal care and nursing care.

"Our second phase (about the same size as the first) will give us full-service catered living with dining and transportation and will tie in with Marriott's multi-level health facilities," Ryerson said.

He said plans are to break ground on Heritage Phase II in mid-summer 1989 after completing final working drawings and floorplan design.

Heritage Phase II construction will be separate from the Marriott project, which will begin construction in early 1989. "We won't be involved with Marriott

at all. They are independent of our second phase."

"It will just all be integrated into the site plan and design so our transportation access is easy from one phase to the other. It will be a fully intergrated community."

Between now and next summer, Ryerson said The Heritage Phase II will start its pre-marketing programs in the Sun City market and refine details in selection of building materials and interior designs.

"We're excited about it," Ryerson said. "It gives us one of the most unique opportunities in the Southwest to have this kind of continuum of lifestyle, with what we call a service-enriched concept."

Ryerson said that while he's aware of what else is going on in the Northwest Valley market, he believes this project, because it's virtually the only one inside Sun City, will have an advantage.

"I think people who have lived in Sun City for any period of time have a preference to stay inside of Sun City, given the alternatives," Ryerson said. "We have contracted for them to retain their rec center privileges."

Ryerson also thinks the complete care lifestyle at one site will be an advantage over some of the other Sun City life care facilities.

"We have always felt it's important to have that health care component and that's why we're delighted to have the Marriott Corp. joining us on this campus."

"We will key in our marketing the independent lifestyle of Phase I to the more service-oriented lifestyle in Phase II to a more intensified health care component in the Marriott community."

Marriott's catered living Brighton Gardens project is a product of its Senior Living Services division. It includes assisted living and personal care suites and a licensed nursing facility offering intermediate and or skilled nursing services.

"Until now, the senior living industry has focused on con-

gregate communities that provide independent living for healthy retirees," said Francis W. Cash, president of the Marriott Service Group and an executive vice president of Marriott Corp.

"However, our research has determined that there is a large market of older adults who desire an independent lifestyle but need some level of daily supervisory assistance. We believe Brighton Gardens will be a significant step in meeting the growing demand for specialized housing for older adults."

The Sun City Brighton Gardens will be one of six catered-living communities Marriott plans to build within the next two years. Construction will begin at Scottsdale and Virginia Beach-Norfolk, Va., sites at about the same time as Sun City.

The Brighton Gardens catered living concept will offer residents three levels of services based on individual needs.

- Assisted living designed for older adults who require limited supervision in performing daily activities such as dressing, bathing or taking medication.

- Personal care, which provides greater assistance with daily activities and attention to medical needs.

- A licensed nursing facility, which offers intermediate or



New managers seek to fill Sun City shopping centers

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The new property managers of the six original Sun City shopping centers are cleaning up the centers and are negotiating with prospective tenants.

Ron Simonsgaard, vice president of leasing, and Ron Roeske, vice president of commercial operations for CBS Property Services Inc., announced some of their intentions for the centers this morning before more than 250 Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce members in the Lakeside Banquet Center.

Simonsgaard and Roeske also said they are trying to raise their profile and establish better community relations as the centers' Arizona Superior Court appointed receiver.

The cleanup program began last Friday. CBS has thoroughly inspected the properties to see what needs to be done, Simonsgaard and Roeske said.

There is still no word of foreclosure on the centers from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, which holds the mortgage, from current centers owner Zane May Operating Partners of Dallas, Simonsgaard said.

Roeske said he didn't know how long CBS would remain the receiver but said the mortgage holder indicated that if Zane May defaults on the centers, CBS would likely be retained as centers manager.

"From a marketing standpoint, we're going full bore ahead," Simonsgaard said. "Neal Waldman (former Zane May leasing agent) will continue to market the properties here in Sun City with some change in direction from myself and CBS on how to approach the Sun City market.

"While we're here, our charter

is if we leave and it's still owned by the current owner, we're going to leave it in better condition than when we took it over," he said.

"We are first and foremost going to pursue new tenants. We're meeting with (the Sun City) Home Owners Association today to solicit ideas on the types of specific tenants they would like to see here and in a couple of weeks we'll meet with the Sun City Ambassadors."

He said CBS representatives also are attending the International Council of Shopping Centers convention next week where they will distribute Sun City centers brochures and information to retailers.

"We are also making a commitment to clean up the centers," Simonsgaard said. "And we have put up our signs with the local Sun City number in the vacant stores."

Roeske said CBS has on staff several former Del Webb Realty and Management people who are familiar with the centers and are helping in the inspection.

"The inspection process included more than just a cursory look at the centers as we drove by," he said. "We had individuals on the roofs, we walked through the restaurants and walked the properties, the parking lots and behind the properties.

"We all took notes and had our dictaphones and went back and reported to the receiver that what we needed to do was an immediate cleanup of the properties if we're going to pursue a very active leasing and marketing program."

After the cleanup, Roeske said, CBS would begin repainting curbs, restrooms and fire

hydrants as one of the first steps.

"We will not at this time go in and do a major cleaning or a major remodeling of the centers. That is not in the receivership program at all at this point," he said.

CBS has also contacted various service vendors and day porters for cleaning debris, trees and shrubs around the centers.

Chamber members questioned how the new Smith's Food King store will affect the other Sun City shopping centers, what CBS is doing to help fill up Sun Bowl Plaza and Thunderbird Plaza and how it hopes to repair the poor tenant-manager relationship of its predecessor.

Although Waldman said the six centers overall are now 85 percent occupied, Simonsgaard said that Grand Center, 107th Avenue and Grand, and Sun Bowl Plaza, 107th and Peoria avenues, may have to include more service-related businesses to fill up and compete with the nearly full centers. He said Smith's will help by bringing a lot of non-Sun City traffic to the Grand Avenue-Del Webb Boulevard area.

"In terms of Thunderbird, we have two major vacancies. We are meeting with a drugstore chain in Las Vegas next week where we expect to move in a significant way to fill that (vacant) Bayless store. The other one (former Value Drug site) we're working on a couple of different types of tenants that we expect to have nailed down shortly."

He also indicated there would likely be some adjustments on cost per square foot leasing renewals to fit current local market conditions since CBS has the authority to make its own decisions in that regard.

Daily News - Sun Times May 9, 1989

Despite lack of curb appeal, older area homes sell

By MIKE GARRETT
Financial editor

SUN CITY — "Curb appeal" — it's a real estate term for a house that gets attention right up front.

Some Sun City Phase I homes that are as much as 27 years old may lack curb appeal but Realtors say that sales are up over last year.

Phase I (the area south of Grand Avenue to Olive Avenue) homes that have been remodeled and updated and are selling at or above the Sun City average, according to area brokers and realty office managers.

And they say younger retirees are moving into the area to replace the longtime residents who have either died or moved into life care facilities and nursing homes.

The Realtors don't agree with area merchants who say the Phase I economic base has deteriorated substantially in the past couple of years. Ken Plein, owner-broker of Tri-Star Realty on Coggins Drive in Phase I and annually one of the area's top five sellers, said there has been a softening of home prices between Grand and Peoria

Avenues where the oldest Sun City homes are located.

But he said prices on homes south of Peoria Avenue have held up quite well.

"What we're finding is too many people are letting some of the homes in the Grand and Peoria

The Realtors don't agree with area merchants who say the Phase I economic base has deteriorated substantially in the past couple of years'

area get quite run down in terms of curb appeal," said Plein. "Their yards are untidy and the homes need roof replacement or exterior paint. Their curb appeal has a great bearing on the neighborhood."

Plein said it's not as much a matter of age or economics of the elderly homeowners for the run-down condition as it is less pride in home ownership and a deferring of

maintenance priorities.

"The deferred maintenance has meant that a home which might have a market value of \$50,000 may only bring \$42,000 to \$45,000.

"But people have shown a little more pride of ownership in the homes south of Peoria which were built in the mid- and late 1960s. They're more concerned about maintaining yards, trimming their trees and fixing their roofs. It's certainly easier to sell homes in the Sun City Country Club area than the earlier-built homes," Plein said.

In any event, Plein said there are fewer Phase I properties for sale now than a year ago, including homes between Peoria and Grand.

"Last year at this time we had about 300 properties for sale in the area and now it's around 250-260."

As for the area's economics, Plein said he occasionally shops at Sun Bowl Plaza's Safeway and Walgreens "and the turnstiles always seem to be clicking there."

Plein said he thinks merchants there need to do more promotions

and advertising to attract area residents who generally are more mobile than they used to be.

"The younger retirees are replacing the older ones and they're going to other Sun City shopping centers," Plein said.

Ken Meade Realty owner-broker Ken Meade agreed with Plein that some Phase I homes have been "truly neglected." He says some home prices have receded 5 percent or more from what they were a year or two ago.

"I think it's because of the maturing of the community," said Meade. "Every year we have a couple hundred people who put their homes on the market and move into the care centers like Royal Oaks and Wooddale.

"Also we don't have Del Webb around anymore to create a demand for the homes."

Meade also sees that condition creeping into some Phase II homes north of Grand.

Condo groups changing their rules by not allowing pets or rentals have also restricted sales in the area, he said.

"The supply of condos has con-

tinued to grow but the demand has diminished. The condos are suffering worse than the houses on the market. We could have sold one last week if they had only allowed pets. It's certainly not a solution to their problems."

As for area residents not patronizing their shopping centers, Meade said it's probably a case of older retirees in their late 70s and 80s not paying much attention to their appearance anymore.

"Those people are not going into stores buying the latest in sports clothes and jackets anymore."

Meade also theorizes that one reason why their homes may be neglected is because of deteriorating eyesight and they simply can't see the neglect.

Mull Realty broker-office manager Ron Smith said he hasn't seen any recent significant changes or trends in Phase I home sales, with supply and demand holding relatively steady.

"Some models have increased in value and some have decreased in last six months. But I don't see any big trend where (home) values are going way down or anything. I

don't think people there have let them run down that much."

Smith said Phase I homes seem to be selling as well as those in any other Sun City area and inventories compare favorably.

"I just don't see any deep appreciation or depreciation on homes in Sun City."

O'Keefe/Better Homes and Gardens owner-broker John O'Keefe says that Sun City homes are now selling about six times faster than Sun City West homes.

Priscilla Richie, manager of O'Keefe's Alabama office in Youngtown, said her office has been doing "super well" selling homes in the area.

She characterized the Phase I area as stable. "People are buying smaller homes and basically we have some very good buys here."

Richie said that while some residents have moved into nursing homes, they have had no "distress sales" where people have had to suddenly pick up and move.

She also says that Youngtown Plaza where her office is located, is loaded with stable tenants and the parking lots are usually full.

Wednesday May 27, 1988 News-Sun A3

Realtor aids SC sellers

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — A local realtor has developed a for-sale-by-owner program to help Sun City homeowners who face the prospect of losing substantial sums on the sale of their home.

Tri-Star Realty owner-broker Ken Plein and his staff of 33 sales agents, working in committees, have developed the "Assist Your Homeowner/Community Program" for the past five months.

Five-year-old Tri-Star now has available 36 for-sale-by-owner signs and 36 open house signs they will install without charge to assist homeowners who have a need to sell their home, who are in a position of low equity and who face a significant financial loss, Plein said.

Tri-Star also will supply four base boards for the open house signs, the owner's phone number sign to place above the for-sale sign and a three-page brochure offering 12 ways to help sell the home faster, sign placement suggestions and safety and danger signals to the homeowner.

The program is a response to WHY USA's \$990 plan now available from its Sun City office to help homeowners sell their own homes.

But Tri-Star doesn't charge anything for comparable services, Plein said. Also, he has an advertising expert who will help the homeowner design his own newspaper advertisement.

The program is specifically

designed more to help Sun City homeowners who have purchased their home or condominium in the last two or three years and now want to sell.

Plein cited examples of why he thinks such a program is necessary in Sun City.

"The other day there was an Annapolis model on the market that was listed in the upper \$70s and sold for \$65,000. There was also a three-bedroom, two-bath condo which initially was marketed in the low \$60s, was lowered to \$49,900 and sold for \$35,000," Plein said.

"In both situations, the owner was not the original owner. They bought at a low price maybe 12 to 17 years ago in the mid-1970s. I heard of another Annapolis situation where a couple paid \$110,000, listed it at \$90,000, accepted \$80,000 and after closing costs and commission, netted \$73,000. That's a \$37,000 loss."

But what is Tri-Star going to get out of providing a free service?

"We're saying that maybe one (homeowner) in three might get frustrated after 30 to 60 days if their house or condo doesn't sell," Plein said. "Maybe they will say that Tri-Star was kind enough to provide us with this signage and we should go to them and have a professional do it."

"And if we do them a favor, all they have to do is tell two or three other people and we will get our market share."

Plein said Tri-Star mostly hopes to help Phase I homeowners who purchased a home in the 1983 to 1986 peak price period only to see their equity drop during the leveling off period since 1987.

"For example, there is the fellow who paid \$50,000 for an H2 model. Now there is a glut of them on the market in the low \$40s. He can't afford to pay a 6 or 7 percent Realtor's commission costing him an additional \$3,500 to \$4,000. He needs to try selling it on his own.

"We don't want the Phase III hotshot who bought his Annapolis for \$48,000 and now has it on the market for \$98,000 to come and take advantage of us," Plein said. "There will be a few who will slip through the cracks. But when a homeowner comes in we will give these signs out to them and say you may use them up to 180 days."

The brochure will offer fundamental selling tips like keeping the yard neat and clean and letting plenty of light into the rooms to provide a more cheerful atmosphere.

"For sign suggestions we have pretty much taken the for-sale, open house and directional sign criteria of the Sun City Area Board of Realtors (SCABOR) so there will be no conflict on how to place their signs."

Plein credited Tri-Star sales agents Roy Folino, Wilhemina Lee and Adrian Chatigny for



News-Sun photo by Mike Garrett

FOR SALE — Tri-Star Realty has decided to help the Sun City homeowner who figures to lose money on the sale of his house by offering these free for-sale-by-owner and open house signs. Tri-Star Realtor-sales agent Roy Folino, from left, owner-broker Ken Plein and Realtor Wilhemina Lee.

being the driving force behind the program.

Folino confirmed that the signs won't be given to just anybody, but rather to those owners who are facing a break-even or loss situation on the sale of their homes if they had to pay a Realtor's commission.

"We certainly don't want to do a credit check on everybody," Folino said. "It will be to those

who haven't overindulged with their home."

Tri-Star is apparently the first Sun City area Realtor to offer such a free service on a widespread basis.

Ron Smith, president of the board of Realtors, declined to comment specifically on the Tri-Star's program but indicated some like it have been tried on a limited basis by other Realtors.

Vacancy rates here are higher

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

Thursday, June 22, 1989

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The 17 area shopping centers have a vacancy rate 5 percent higher than metropolitan Phoenix centers, a survey shows.

The 17 centers had a combined vacancy rate of 21.7 percent, compared to an overall metropolitan rate of 15.4 percent, according to the annual Shopping Center Vacancy Report compiled by Kammrath & Associates, a Phoenix real estate investment-research firm.

The 21.7 percent Sun City figure is nearly 7 percent higher than the 15 percent area vacancy rate released by Kammrath a year ago.

Some of the vacancy rates Kammrath compiled for the six original Sun City centers were disputed or updated by CBS Properties Leasing Manager Neal Waldman.

He said Kammrath uses figures that include the "out-parcels" such as banks and service stations in arriving at their total vacancy rate percentage.

"We don't use those numbers," Waldman said.

The Kammrath survey showed the overall Phoenix rate for 556 centers was up from 13.9 percent in May 1988 and 11.2 percent in May 1987, according to Robert E. Kammrath, president of the firm. The survey is based on on-site inspections of centers 30,000 square feet or larger, representing 62 million square feet.

The survey was research for the fifth annual Property Book Directory of Shopping Centers that Kammrath markets to developers, leasing agents, commercial real estate brokers and prospective tenants.

"More than 4½ million square feet of new shopping center space opened in the last year," Kammrath said. "This was far in excess of demand created by population growth."

The Shopping Center Vacancy Report also shows that the amount of vacant space in shopping centers increased by more than 1½ million square feet to a total of nine million square feet.

Average vacancy rates varied significantly by the type of shopping center. Neighborhood centers typically anchored by a grocery store, which are the predominant centers in the Sun Cities, had 10.5 percent of all space vacant. Unanchored specialty centers averaged 32.3 percent and regional malls had

9.3 percent of all space vacant.

Among the 17 area centers, only the 102,400-square-foot Bell Camino Center at Del Webb Boulevard and Bell Road was 100 percent leased.

Other low-vacancy centers surveyed were Campana Square, 98th Avenue and Bell Road, with one vacancy, and Grand Center, 107th Avenue and Grand, and Greenway Terrace, 99th Avenue and Greenway Road, with four vacancies each.

Greenway Terrace had 5.6 percent of its space vacant and Grand Center, 6.6 percent.

Sun Shadow Square at 99th Avenue and Bell Road showed the most vacancies with 23. But that number added up to only 34,500 square feet of the center's 134,200 square feet for a 25.7

'More than 4½ million square feet of new shopping center space opened in the last year,' the study said. 'This was far in excess of demand created by population growth.'

percent vacancy rate.

Area centers with the largest percentage of vacant space are the Youngtown Center at 111th and Alabama Avenues (because of the pullout of the co-operative grocery store last year) the Union Hills Center at 107th Avenue and Union Hills Drive, with 66.9 percent vacancy; Thunderbird Plaza at 99th Avenue and Thunderbird Road, with 54.6 percent vacant; Mercado del Sol on the northeast corner of Camino Del Sol and Spanish Garden Drive in Sun City West, 46.7 percent vacant; and Royal Oak Mall, 103rd Avenue and Thunderbird, 42.1 percent vacant.

Mercado del Sol was the only center with more vacancies than tenants, 15 spaces empty to 13 occupied, while Sun Shadow Square recently passed the 50 percent mark with 26 tenants to 23 vacancies.

Waldman said Grand Center actually only had one vacancy of 2,000 square feet and is 97 percent leased. He said Greenway Terrace had two vacancies of 1,400 and 1,500 square feet, respectively, for a 97 percent

See Centers, A5

New age rule doesn't worry real estate agents

By JACQUE PAPPAS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Area real estate brokers say they are not worried about a new county ordinance that increases the minimum age of residents living in retirement communities like Sun City and Sun City West.

The ordinance, which affects about eight major retirement communities in the county, raises the minimum age limit from 55 to 50.

Bob Ferguson, office manager for O'Keefe Real Estate Better Homes and Gardens, said fears that an increase in the minimum age will create havoc in

the housing market should be put to rest.

"It's not a shock factor. I think our community is structured as such that the housing market will not really be affected," Ferguson said. "Everything in the world affects the market value in some way or another, but we just can't get scared and run the other way."

Legal staff has recommended the county's senior overlay zoning be made to conform with federal legislation that went into effect March 12.

The ordinance change, which affects about eight major retirement commu-

nities in the county, will become effective Aug. 10.

Ferguson said it would seem fair for residents between 50 and 55 to be allowed to live in Sun City if the escrow on their home opens before August 10.

County attorneys, however, have said the escrow must close before the deadline if a person younger than 55 is to live in a home in the senior citizen overlay district.

"We have a lot of agents who are talking to people who are between 50 and 55 and waiting to buy," he said. "They can always purchase a home.

The question is living there."

Mae Rabenius, supervisor of the membership office for the Recreation Centers of Sun City, said the centers will check the ages of new residents who buy homes in the retirement community.

"It's a really fine line there. I just feel as long as people have signed papers in good faith and intentions to live in Sun City before Aug. 10 that they should be okay," Rabenius said. "As far as what we will do for those who do not comply, no policy has been determined yet."

Nevertheless, other real estate bro-

kers say the new ordinance will not sway the housing market.

Ken Meade, owner of Ken Meade Realty, said determining whether a person can live in a house does not necessarily affect whether he will buy it.

"It's a question as far as what to do if you are caught in the middle of a transaction after Aug. 10. We have a real gray area," Meade said. "But it's important to remember that you have to be 55 to live in the home but you don't have to be 55 to buy it."

"I don't think this will hurt the market. I'm an optimist," Meade said.

News-Sun July 15/89

Lawson

New hope

Real estate market shows promise in SC

By MIKE GARRETT
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun Cities resale home market has stabilized and the number of listings has shown a significant reduction from its January all-time high, local real estate brokers say.

But some home prices are apparently still on the decline while others have nudged up over last year, brokers say.

Sun City Area Board of Realtors President Ron Smith said Multiple Listing Service (MLS) figures through Aug. 8 show a 2 percent increase over a comparable 1988 date. He said total sales transactions are 1,027 compared with 1,007 in 1988.

The board area includes the Sun Cities, Youngtown and the Peoria subdivisions of Westbrook Village, Country Meadows and Sun Aire Estates.

Mull Realty owner-broker Smith said a positive sign for the board was the total market listings decline to 1,585 from January's high of 1,923.

Other positive signs for the Sun Cities real estate community are an increase in condominium sales over last year and a recent drop in mortgage interest rates.

Smith said the new Fair Housing Law should help Sun Cities resales because other Valley retirement communities with lower age restrictions might have a tougher time complying with the law.

The one negative statistic in the picture indicates that the average Sun Cities home price is \$3,925 less than it was last year, although the Sun Cities' largest Realtor reports nearly a \$4,000 increase over last year.

Smith said the old laws of supply and demand are still at work. As prices have dropped below what the competition is offering, homes have become more attractive to buyers and sales have gone up. That has especially been true of high inventory Sun City condominiums, whose sales have jumped significantly over last year, Smith said.

"Condominium sales are up about five units a month over a year ago," he said.

As inventories of certain models drop, their prices have shown signs of stabilizing or rising.

See Resale, A6

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 1989

DAILY NEWS-SUN

Resale home listings decline in Sun Cities

— From A1

ing slightly, Smith said. "I think we have seen the bottom of prices dropping in many instances."

"On one Phase II duplex model, we have sold more already this year than we sold all of last year," Smith said. Phase II of Sun City is the area between Grand Avenue and Bell Road. "Condominiums have also depreciated less than 2 percent this year over last year, while in 1988 they depreciated over 8 percent."

Smith said the best-selling single-family homes, duplexes and condominiums are those priced fairly within the market and have been kept up the best.

He said buyers are also coming from all over the country again, partially through Sun City Ambassadors and Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce promotional efforts.

"We have so much value here in the Sun Cities. And I think word of mouth about the Sun Cities among potential buyers still seems to be the best way to attract them into the area," Smith said. "I think the Ambassadors will make a big difference there and I support what they're doing. They have made some difference and the Realtors have been distributing their brochures. But it's early yet."

Smith acknowledged that the Realtors still face the prospect of another listings increase as aging residents continue to move into the area's many lifecare-retirement centers.

"I think that the big exodus of that type of thing is over," Smith said. "Freedom Plaza is 90 percent filled." Freedom Plaza is a new Peoria life-care center that is drawing most of its residents from Sun City.

"I don't see that as a bad thing. Sure, it's going to affect

supply for a while. But as supply is affected, values come down some and it will again bring more people into the area."

He said the opening of Freedom Plaza and other life-care centers will help the Realtors sell Sun City better to younger retirees knowing they will have life-care options if and when they need them.

On an individual Realtor basis, Ken Meade Realty owner-broker Ken Meade said he had 412 transactions through July 1989, compared with 305 a year ago. He said he doesn't keep a log of his sold listings prices but is concerned that the average Sun City selling price is still declining.

"Every time I've taken a look at the number of sales and divided it into the total dollar volume, prices are down," he said.

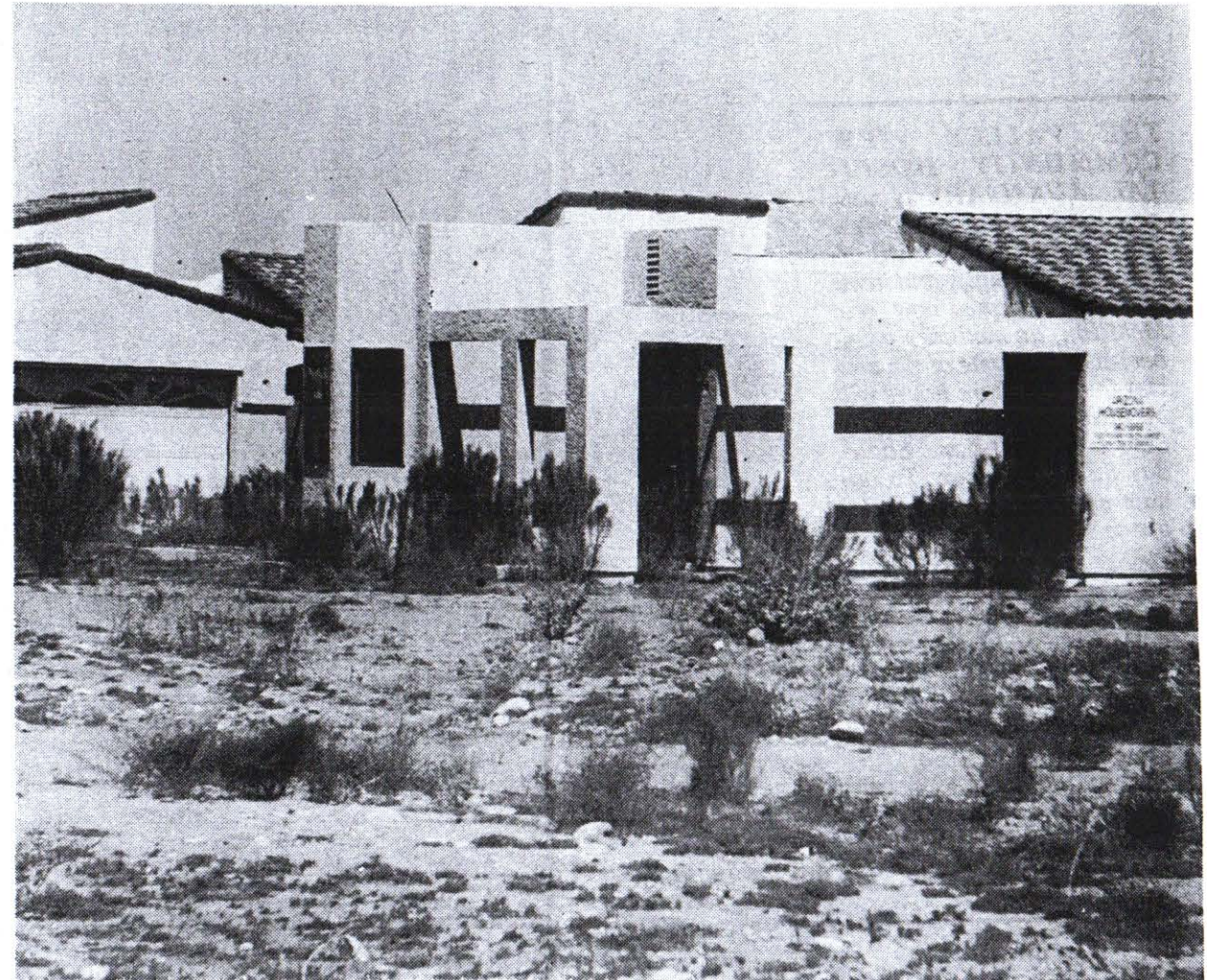
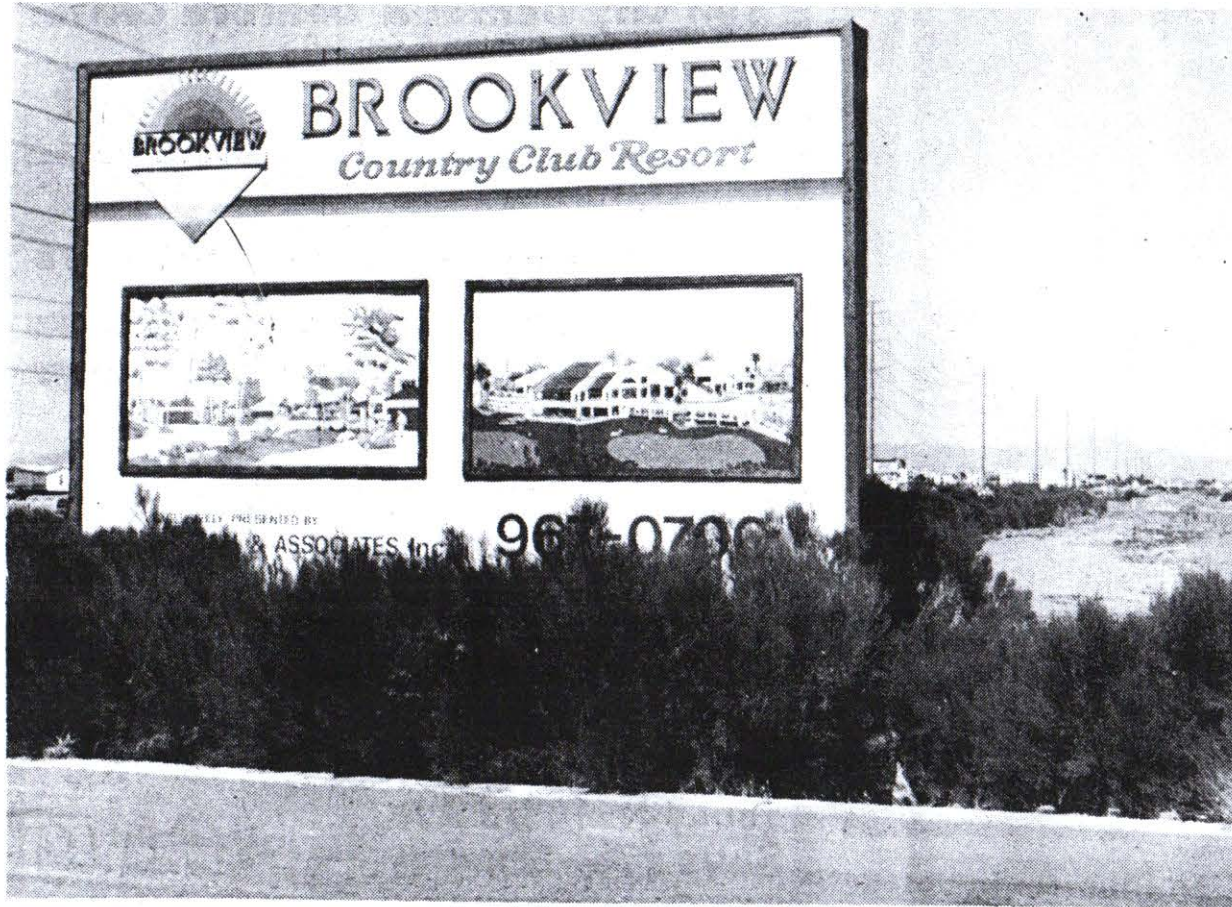
According to the Aug. 1 MLS book, Meade divided the 979 sales into the total 1989 volume of \$71,687,056 and compared that to the 961 sales and \$74,140,000 volume from Aug. 1 last year.

"It shows an average of \$3,925 per sale that we're down or about a 5 percent decrease in prices," he said.

O'Keefe Real Estate/Better Homes and Gardens spokesman John Caldemone said combined listings and sales of the Sun Cities' largest Realtor were off about 3 percent over last year.

"But on new listings, we're up around 2 percent," Caldemone said. "We think the slide has stopped and sales are starting to turn around."

He said that O'Keefe's sales January through May were just so-so compared with last year but that "June-July figures were exceptional and August has started out very well."



GHOST TOWN. With Sun City West in the background, model homes for Brookview Country Club sit empty one mile north of Bell Road on 115th Avenue. Touted as a major "resort retirement community," developers of the community went bankrupt a few years ago and the work on the project ceased.

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July 26-Aug. 1, 1989

Up for sale

Sluggish economy leaves investors struggling to sell land once in demand

By LAURIE HURD-MOORE
Sun Cities Independent

The metamorphosis from a thorny, desert caterpillar into a brilliant, well-rounded butterfly appears not to be in the future for one segment of the Agua Fria River bed.

Russian thistle and tumbleweeds are all that sit on land surrounding the Sun Cities Art Museum, north of Bell Road between the Sun Cities.

The land, at one time the proposed site for Arizona State University's Northwest Valley campus, stands empty except for the museum and a small patch of abandoned homes -- relics of the beginning and end of a once-envisioned resort community.

The location would appear to be attractive to potential developers: sandwiched between the Sun Cities, adjacent to a community museum and surrounded by bustling development to the west and south.

But owners of the land remain pessimistic. A resurgence in the economy will be needed before any construction begins.

ASU's senior adult campus facility was to have been built on a parcel of land adjacent to the museum at 17425 N. 115th Avenue.

The property beside the museum was once a gift to Arizona State University.

Today, the land is owned by an investment firm that plans to hold on to the property until Arizona real estate prices improve.

The 37.7 acres is part of a 160-acre parcel, which is owned by the firm of Ratliff, Muhr and Levinsky in Phoenix.

The land was originally owned by the Del E. Webb Development Co. In 1984 the company donated 37.7 acres to ASU, for the university's Sun Cities campus.

The center initially was designed to include two single-story buildings.

Classrooms, administrative offices and a gerontology research center were to be con-

The donated land closed escrow March 23, 1984, with a provision that the property would revert to the Webb Corp. unless

construction began within 18 months.

ASU, however, returned the land in October 1985, after officials announced the university could not break ground within the allotted time.

The main factor cited for this construction delay was lack of funds.

Only \$780,000 in cash donations and pledges were raised toward a price tag of \$3.5 million to \$4 million.

Bob Ellis, assistant vice president for university relations, says ASU still is searching for a permanent west Valley site for its continuing-education programs.

ASU currently offers several adult education courses in Sun City, leasing classroom space at Bell Professional Plaza.

"We don't have any property in the Sun Cities except for the Sundome. We don't think we will change or rebuild the Sundome to hold classes.

"In the future, we would like to find a site and see what else we can do," says Mr. Ellis.

Martha Moyer, manager of the Del Webb Public Affairs Department, says once ASU returned the land, negotiations began with John Ratliff of Ratliff, Muhr and Levinsky.

"It wasn't like we took the land back because we could sell it," says Ms. Moyer.

"We sold it to John Ratliff for investment properties. They own several holdings out here," she adds.

Mr. Ratliff says the 160 acres adjacent to the museum was bought solely for investment purposes.

"We assume we can sell it and the new owners could make it commercial on the frontage as it is across the road (Bell Road)," says Mr. Ratliff.

"They could build houses or townhomes in the background. There could be retirement housing," he adds.

Because of the sluggish economy, it is difficult to speculate what will ultimately happen to the land.

"We are investors not

• LAND

From page one

developers," says Mr. Ratliff.

"We are in the position to sell when a developer is ready. They can buy our property and make us some money."

The undeveloped 55-acre commercial lot in the center of Sun City West is also owned by Ratliff, Muhr and Levinsky.

The island of property, surrounded by Woodside, Sandridge and Spanish Garden Drives, is zoned C-2 general commercial, for a regional shopping center.

Lloyd Levinsky, a general partner in a limited partnership owning the commercial acreage says there are no plans to develop the site.

Ratliff, Muhr and Levinsky are also partners in 21 other Sun City West commercial properties, according to Phil Brant, manager of commercial sales and leasing for the Del E. Webb Corp.

One mile north of the Sun Cities Art Museum, on the west side of 115th Avenue, is another testament to a grand project.

Model duplexes for Brookview Country Club Resort stand in decay.

A long-standing sign by the homes proclaim its name and an out-of-date telephone number.

The development is located on land annexed by Surprise between Bell and Beardsley roads on 115th Avenue.

"They were unable to keep the payments up on the bonds, so a bank in Arkansas took it over," says Allen Powell, a former director for the Property Owners and Residents Association author of the long-range study for the community.

On the other side of 115th Avenue, across from the models, are 86 acres offered by Grout Properties.

The company is selling the land, zoned rural, for owner Robert Romney of Phoenix.

The land has been for sale approximately 15 months, according to a spokesperson at Grout properties.

Approximately four miles north of the Sun Cities Art Museum at 11102 W. Rose Garden Lane, is the Sun City West Water Reclamation Plant.

Fred Kriess, manager of the Citizens Utilities Company in Maricopa County, says the plant is located on 35 acres of land.

See LAND, page 7

AUGUST 31, 1989

On the move

Locals hit road with light loads

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Sun Citians are moving about as often as they have at any time in this decade but they're traveling lighter.

That's because the majority of them are moving from larger quarters into smaller ones. The mass exodus from Sun Cities single-family homes into the area's many lifecare and retirement facilities has been well documented by realty brokers.

Because they have considerably less space than before, residents are either sending their excess baggage to their children and grandchildren back home or they're selling it off in the many Sun Cities estate sales and auctions, according to people involved in helping Sun Citians move.

Ron Smith, Mull Realty owner-broker and Sun City Area Board of Realtors president, said he had no indications Sun Citians were moving more often than they did five or six years ago.

"As long as I've been in the marketplace, we've had a fair amount of lateral moves. But I don't think they're any greater now than they've been," Smith said. "We've always had quite a few. Our people here have always made moves more rapidly than the national average."

From what Smith has heard, the national average is about one move every 7½ years. He estimates Sun Citians move once every three to 3½ years.

"When I came out of Minnesota in 1983 I was astonished how often people out here moved," he said.

Smith also said that people tend to be loyal to the broker who sold their first house if they provided good service.

June Young, a longtime certified moving consultant for Peoria-based Allied Snyder Moving & Storage Inc., said her company has handled a large number of moves into the local care centers.

"It seems like with a large majority of those moves, we ship a lot of the family furniture to some of the children or grandchildren or nieces," Young said. "The retirees don't have room for it in their apartments. We handle long-distance shipments as well as local moving when that happens."

Young also said there are many more estate sales in the Sun Cities than when she began working for Snyder many years ago.

She said residents have already gotten rid of many items before Allied arrives to pack possessions. "The trend used to be that you kept everything. But it kind of depends on how long people have lived here. Those who have lived here 15 to 20 See Locals, A4

Locals lighten moving loads

—From A1

years tend to be the keepers. The ones who have moved more frequently have learned to lighten up a little."

She said Allied-Snyder, which has been serving the Valley since 1946, has moved many Sun City families many times just within Sun City or from Sun City to Sun City West or other area retirement centers.

"They will call and say 'You moved me 10 or 12 years ago and I want you to move us again.'"

Young recalls one retiree who moved from Youngtown to Florida, back to Youngtown and then back to Florida again in just a few years time.

"I guess people are restless and don't quite know where they want to be," Young said. "I don't quite understand why people move so much locally."

"It seems like they get established in a neighborhood and they make friends with the neighbors and they have roots there. It's amazing how often people continue to move within the area."

The reason most Sun Citians are moving from larger to smaller quarters is their age.

"The Sun City marketplace has matured so that you have a much older clientele now," said Allied-Snyder owner Bob Rock, who purchased the business last year from founder Gil Snyder.

Many who first moved to Sun City in their 60s are now in their 80s and physically can no longer maintain a full-size house, he said.

"Then when a person passes away and leaves the other, you have some type of a lifestyle reconstruction and need to get into something different," Young said. "I think people who move into the lifecare centers seem to feel that they don't want to be a burden on relatives."

Others want to move back home to Minnesota, California,

Colorado and Washington to be with their children or friends, she said. "We move people all over the world. I recently had a very old couple's large shipment go to Hawaii from Sun City because their daughter and her family were residents there."

Moving costs apparently aren't a factor in most moves. Rock said the average move just within the Sun Cities runs around \$200 while out-of-state shipments involving a full van load is about \$1,500, depending on the kinds of services requested.

"People out here look for reliability and trust," Rock said.

Larry Mesler of Larry Mesler Realty & Auctioneers, 10404 W. Coggins Drive, said residents on the move are becoming less reluctant to sell their valuables and collectibles, which constitutes a significant portion of his business.

"In Sun City we're getting bombarded with people moving into Freedom Plaza, Sierra Winds and Royal Oaks.

"They're selling a lot of their collectibles plus we're doing so much real estate now. These people have reached the point of saying, 'Let's sell it all.'"

He said the collectibles market has outpaced the furniture demand at his auctions.

"We sold an eight-inch French vase a couple of weeks ago that brought \$2,100. That's the type of stuff people really go after. Antique furniture still sells well but they're more after the collectibles, the jewelry and the automobiles."

Mesler, who recently opened his second gallery in Scottsdale's McCormick Ranch, helps people recognize and sell a \$500 collector plate that might have brought \$5 in a garage sale.

"When you put it up for auction and you have 20 collectors after it, they all know what it's worth. The bidding gets contagious and they go crazy."

Sound ground a must for home-hunting seniors

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Senior citizens rank a retirement community's financial stability as their most important concern when choosing a place to live, a recent study says.

The study, released by Marriott Senior Living Services, reports that older Americans are becoming increasingly savvy about what's available in the housing market.

The study indicates that basing decisions on availability of social and recreational amenities may be a thing of the past.

Although administrators at local retirement centers confirm the study's findings, they agree that other amenities are still important to the average consumer.

Sara Jo Victors, social director and sales coordinator of Madison House in Sun City West, said most seniors will stray away from a facility with a rocky background.

"I think that residents in a retirement community are very sensitive to the retirement centers and history of centers there. I think they know who is weak or who is going strong. They have that awareness," Victors said. "But other amenities are still very important to people. Just because people move into retirement areas doesn't mean they are any less active."

Madison House, which was built four years ago, has 178 rental apartment units.

Administrators from other centers agree, saying competence in serving seniors' needs is directly linked to financial

stability and long-term commitment in operating a retirement community.

"The long-term financial situation is very important to the people who are coming here to look and explore the options to them," said Mary Bennett of Freedom Plaza Life-Care Community in Peoria. "For them to know that 20 years from now the same organization is there to fill a promise made is important."

Bennett said Freedom Plaza, which has nearly sold all of its 350 units since it opened in July, recently celebrated the burning of its mortgage.

"I think that offers unparalleled financial security," she said.

Marriott Senior Living Services commissioned American Family Opinion Inc. an in-

dependent organization in Toledo, Ohio, to conduct the nation-wide survey.

It polled older Americans in 14 major cities across the United States to determine senior attitudes and perceptions toward retirement communities.

Denny Ryerson, president of The Ryerson Co., said the builder contracted with Marriott to construct one of several prototype retirement centers in Sun City because of the corporation's sound financial reputation.

The centers, now under construction, will complement Ryerson's 101-unit Heritage of Sun City.

"Financial strength and a good track record is why we chose Marriott to be on our campus," Ryerson said of his company, which develops multi-family retirement homes in the

greater Phoenix area.

But Ryerson said financial stability alone doesn't cut it.

"The level of services and reputation in the local market are important qualities," Ryerson said. "I think any level of experience makes you do better job. I think it is a composition of a lot of things, though, and not just one."

Seniors 70 years or older who had an income of at least \$25,000 were polled for the study.

The study said 95 percent of the seniors polled are concerned most with the fiscal strength of a retirement and health care provider. A resident's personal security was close at 92 percent.

Having a caring staff and quality food tied for third place at 91 percent. A non-industrial environment was fifth with 87

percent, followed by emergency care (86 percent), privacy (85 percent) and apartment maintenance (80 percent).

Other factors viewed important included grounds and facilities maintenance, on-site nursing care, availability of off-site nursing services, local transportation, housekeeping services and laundry.

The availability of fitness programs, personal care, recreational activity and creative arts were less important in the selection of a retirement center.

Marriott Senior Living Services division now manages 13 retirement communities throughout the United States.

The company recently announced plans to develop 150 senior living communities during the next five years.

KEN MEADE REALTY
 1983 • Celebrating 10 Successful Years • 1993

Ken Meade Realty celebrates 10th year

"In many ways it's hard to believe it's been 10 years," said Ken Meade. "Starting a new real estate operation in a market area which many felt was already saturated with realty companies took a lot of courage and self-confidence. But several friends and 16 agents, who were all supporters, convinced me to open my own office. They felt my experience and know-how would lead to success."

Ken Meade, a broker for 33 years, worked for Del Webb for nine years between 1974 and 1982 and was one of their leading salesmen selling more than 450 properties during this period. He then moved over to Mull Realty and served as the General Manager for over a year and a-half. "Some of the sales people there urged me to open my own business," said Ken. "Quite frankly, without the support from those 16 people, I would never have opened my own office." A number of agents who joined Ken Meade Realty when it opened are still with the Company today. Those agents include Connie Josewski, Lois Kottke, Mary Lou Faragher,



Ken Meade, whose photo has been prominent in the Company's advertising, moved to Phoenix in 1958.

Charlotte Murphy, Bill & Emmie Lou Fedoryk, Beth Emmons, Vern Bush, Ed Sowalskie, Hilda Cornelius, Dolores Stepanovic and Martha Sauls, who recently retired.

"To me the key word to succeed in this business is attitude," said

Ken. "I try very hard to keep a positive, upbeat attitude. I try to instill that in the people who work with me. I believe in the law of physics, or as Sir Isaac Newton stated, "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." We have a tremendously harmonious group of people. They cooperate and try to help one another. This is not an easy chore with this many people."

In 1984 Ken said, "I would like to be known as a quality and reliable Real Estate office in the Sun City marketplace and possibly open another office in Sun City West some day." Not only did Ken Meade open another office, he opened three more for a total of four, two in Sun City and two in Sun City West. "When Ken Meade Realty was started in October 1983 we had seven sales associates that month and the original 16 within 60 days and today we have almost 300. Adding additional offices was the logical thing to do," he said.

In 1986 Ken Meade Realty was the third largest realty company in the Sun City area. In 1987 it

became the second largest with the first quarter up 132% over the first quarter of 1986. Ken says, "I still maintain our people are our greatest asset. The attitude and cooperation we display among ourselves, the harmony we maintain between offices, the way we present ourselves to our customers, is all part of the success story." He said, "I am very fortunate to have so many achievers working for me. In fact, almost 40% of my sales people are million dollar or multi-million dollar producers."

Priscilla Richie, the Manager of the Greenway Terrace office, joined the Company in July 1990. In 1991 and 1992 Ken Meade Realty became the number one realty company in the Sun Cities area. "We could not have accomplished this without the positive attitude and hard work that our sales associates and managers put into each and every listing and sale," said Ken.

"I am very proud of all of my sales associates, managers and office staff. In fact, I believe we

See Positive attitude, Page 3

Positive attitude makes difference

—From Page 2

have the very best office staff in town and the best real estate managers in the Valley. We have

come a very long way in 10 short years and we still try very hard to do what is right for every customer on every transaction," said Ken.

Transplanted New Yorker thrives in real estate

Both Ken Meade and his wife Alice were born in New York City and raised in the suburbs of New York on Long Island. Ken and Alice moved to Phoenix, Ariz., with their three children Steve, Janet and Patricia in 1958. Some might call it a family affair because Ken, Alice, Steve, Janet and Pat have all played a part in the success of the Company.

Ken obtained his Real Estate Brokers License in June 1960 while working with the Real Estate firm of Arizona Land Corporation. He later became sales manager for Crandall and Associates and was instrumental in raising the capital needed to build the large amusement park in East Phoenix known as Legend City. After completing the Dale Carnegie

public speaking course and their sales course, Ken joined the Del Webb Development Company in January 1974. He spent nine years as a Sales Counselor with Webb becoming one of the leading salespeople in the New Sales area. In 1982 Ken joined Mull Realty as General Manager and helped Mull Realty increase its market share considerably before leaving in the fall of 1983 to form Ken Meade Realty. Ken Meade Realty officially opened for business on October 7, 1983, with one saleslady, Connie Josewski. Today the Company has nearly 300 active agents and is the largest and most successful in the Sun Cities market, with four modern offices strategically located to service these communities.

The rush is on

Homes selling at rapid pace in the Sun Cities

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

Most area Realtors agree: Now may be the best time ever to sell a home in the Sun Cities.

A sudden rush to buy retirement homes in the Sun Cities has led to a shortage of available properties and a dramatic increase in the average resale price of area homes.

Those who sell now are likely to get a higher price for their home, says Ken Plein, owner of Tri-Star Realty, the third largest real estate agency in Sun City.

"Only 250 properties (are for

sale) in Sun City, 250 in Sun City West, 50 in Westbrook Village," Mr. Plein says.

"We are at the lowest point of inventory, the lowest amount of resale homes, condos and duplexes we have had in 14 years. We have approximately 29,000 dwelling units in Sun City. The 250 on the market now — that is less than 1 percent."

Realtor Kaye Nossem of Ken Meade Realty agrees "the market has totally turned around from what it was a year ago. Our inventory is way down and prices are way up."

A shortage of homes and condominiums mixed with a sudden influx of buyers means sellers can ask higher prices for their properties, Mr. Plein says. Buyers who want a home will just have to fork over the funds or go elsewhere.

The average home is selling for \$94,000. In 1991, Mr. Plein says, the average price of a home was \$81,000. Prices of condominiums also have increased, with a typical condo selling for \$58,000 in 1991, \$68,000 in 1993 and \$72,000 today.

See ■ HOME SALES, Page 3

"We're in quite a hot real estate market right now and because of that the seller has options he didn't have three to four years ago," says Steve Meade, manager of Ken Meade Realty's Bell Road office.

"Buyers are more likely to take a property not in mint condition because they have fewer choices. We have more buyers than attractive homes (for sale)."

Mr. Plein says the time it takes to sell a home has also decreased.

In 1991, a Realtor typically sold a home in 110 days. In 1992, the average home sold in 91 days. In 1993, a home sold within 72 days. Today, a home in the area will sell in 61 days. The same is true of con-

dominiums, Mr. Plein says. Today, condos typically sell within 72 days. However, in 1991 the average condo sold in 118 days, in '92, 102 days and in '93, 82 days.

Tri-Star Realty, with 110 agents, expects to break its own financial record this year, says Mr. Plein, 1995 president-elect of the Sun City Area Association of Realtors, which is comprised of 905 agents.

Last year, agents sold 3,059 properties totaling \$240 million. This year they expect to sell 3,500 homes and condos totaling \$300 million. In 1992, Realtors sold 2,434 properties, up from 2,370 in 1991.

Mr. Plein attributes the seller's

market to several factors, among them promotion of the retirement community by the all-volunteer Sun City Ambassadors, residents selling their homes to move into retirement centers, an improved economy and a "dramatic drop" in interest rates.

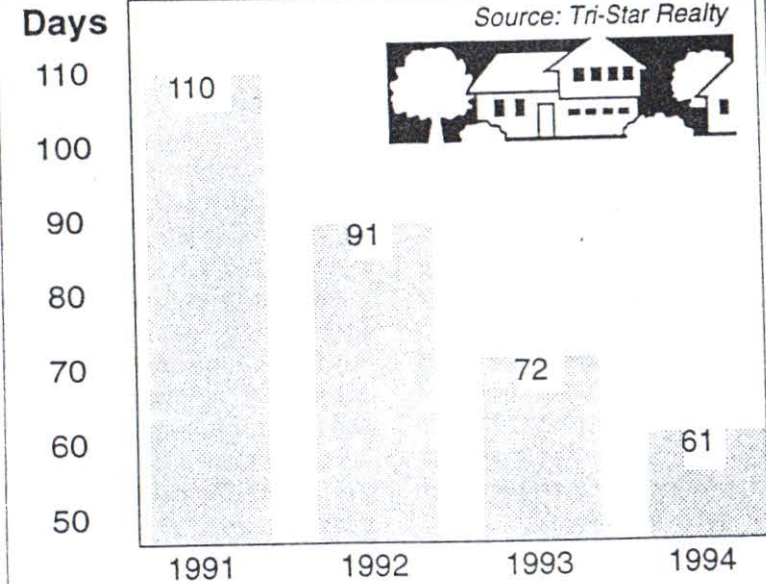
Mr. Plein says a drop in interest rates affects 30 percent of home buyers, but both he and Mr. Meade say lower interest rates may enable future Sun Cities residents to sell their homes in other parts of the country. In addition, Mr. Plein says

baby boomers who were born in the 1940s are now beginning to turn 55 — the age at which they become eligible to move in the Sun Cities.

"This creates a phenomenal market in Sun City," he says, adding that he expects the strong market to continue for the next three to five years.

"If inflation is held in check and interest rates also, I think we'll see a healthy growth by Del Webb in Sun City West and UDC homes in Westbrook."

Average market time for Sun Cities homes



Graph by KATHLEEN WINSTEAD/Sun Cities Independent

Local resale values soar

By TOM EVANS
Daily News-Sun staff

If you own a home in the Sun Cities, chances are you're getting richer with each passing moment.

The Sun Cities area is leading the rest of the Valley when it comes to increasing resale prices of homes, with a 17 percent increase in resale prices between 1993 and 1994.

That makes real-estate brokers and developers such as the Del Webb Corp., who compiled a survey on the values, very optimistic about the housing market as developments like Webb's Sun City West expansion area and Sun City Grand push for sales.

"I think it shows that the trend is toward a great deal of appreciation in values, and I think it's even better for Sun City West," said John Waldron, manager of public and community relations for Webb in Sun City West. "The entering point in the market is higher and getting better."

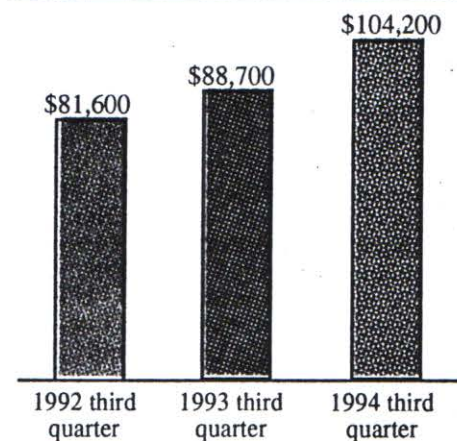
Ken Meade, owner of Ken Meade Realty in the Northwest Valley, said recent national exposure through events such as the National Basketball Association's All-Star Game, which was earlier this month in Phoenix, is attracting outsiders to the area.

"The market is very good right now," he said. "It's 75 degrees outside, and people are freezing in other places. We looked like heroes during NBA weekend."

According to the Webb survey, the third-quarter average resale value of a home in Sun City, Sun City West, and a few outlying communities was \$88,700 in 1993 and jumped to \$104,200 in 1994.

The rise in resale prices continues a trend started in the early 1980s, with the Sun Cities area leading the rest of the Valley in home appreciation.

Average resale value of homes in the Sun Cities area



Figures include all homes in Sun City and Sun City West, as well as a few homes in other area developments.

Source: Del Webb Corp.

Tom Evans/Daily News-Sun

In fact, Sun City West enjoyed the highest home appreciation rate in the Valley in 1993, according to a survey conducted by Arizona State University published in the April 1994 issue of Arizona Business Magazine.

Homes in Sun City West appreciated by an average of 2.4 percent that year, double the next-highest rates, which were in the Scottsdale area.

Higher resale prices mean when people in the area try to sell their homes, the value of the homes keeps getting higher and higher. This increases market demand, meaning houses are sold at a higher price and are on the sale block a shorter amount of time, Waldron said.

Meade said the market is as good as he's seen it in 20 to 25 years, with the last similar rise occurring when Webb was selling the last homes in

See Sun Cities, A5

Sun Cities tops in survey

—From A1
Sun City.

Waldron said one reason for the continued increase in home values in the area is the careful attention residents pay to their homes.

"If you look at both the Sun Cities, you see that folks take care of their homes," he said. "They remain spotless over time, and I think another reason for the increase is the amenities offered by the recreation centers in these communities."

While the rise in resale

values is good news for Webb as it looks to begin its Sun City Grand project in Surprise, Waldron said the company is still focusing on keeping those values up in Sun City West.

Meade said the rise in numbers should help developers like Webb bring more home buyers into the area.

"I think this is an encouraging time for them to move forward," he said. "The whole Northwest Valley is going to explode in the next five to 10 years."

Deer, antelope play by these Sun City homes

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Paul Beresic soon will be moving his family from a large house in Glendale to a smaller "home on the range" in one of Sun City's least-known neighborhoods, Rancho Estates.

It's horse country, west of 111th Avenue between Peoria and Olive avenues. Most people think the place isn't part of Sun City, but it is.

Among the Beresics' neighbors-to-be is Alice Backle, who lives a block

away on Hatcher Road. She and her husband are in love with their acre of range land.

"I do like the elbow space," Backle said Wednesday. "It's close enough to the neighbors to wave across the street and say 'good morning,' but not so close that you can hear the rattle of the breakfast dishes being cleared."

That's what Beresic and his wife wanted too, he said. That and some room for his large motorhome.

Del Webb created Rancho Estates

in the 1960s as an alternative to the city-like life of Sun City. It would be a country home atmosphere, a place for people to have horses if they wanted them.

From Webb's point of view, Rancho Estates was a failure. Few people opted for the large lots, the open trail system, or the wildlife that regularly trotted, crawled or flew up from the Agua Fria riverbed that runs along the back of the area.

Eventually, as construction of Sun City entered Phase II north of Grand

Avenue, Webb sold the remaining lots in Rancho Estates as a unit, and abandoned the project.

But for some, the ranchettes — as many people call the homes, are just what they want. It's just what Beresic wanted, he said: large lots, recreation center privileges, nice neighbors and a smaller house.

Even so, the home he is building, at 3,500 square feet, is one of the largest in Sun City. Like the others in Rancho Estates, it also may be

► See Residents enjoy, A6

Residents enjoy ranch lots

■ From A1

among the most expensive.

Beresic won't say what he's paying for the custom-built home, but one across the street is on the market with an asking price of \$395,000, he said.

Steve Meade, a Realtor at Ken Meade Realty in Sun City, said he has seen homes in Rancho Estates come to market with asking prices hitting \$500,000. That is higher than the lakefront homes along Viewpoint and Dawn lakes off Thunderbird Boulevard generally command.

These days, Rancho residents say, there are few horses kept in the corrals and stables, but there is a lot of horsepower around. Much of it is in several notable collections of antique automobiles, including a stable full of Edsels, while the rest is in luxurious motor homes that Rancho residents now keep in large outbuildings.

Owners of the antique vehicles prefer not to publicize their collections, they say.

In the rest of Sun City, deed restrictions prohibit outbuildings; here almost every

lot has one, and they aren't small sheds, either.

Beresic's "garage" will house a 40-foot motorhome made from a converted bus chassis, along with two or three cars, for instance. A few blocks away, on 112th Avenue, a retired Phoenix policeman has built a 16-foot by 40-foot two-story garage on his 2-acre lot. He uses it as a place to putter around in, he said.

Rancho Estates has the only still-vacant land in Sun City zoned for single-family homes, and, in the last year, three or four have been constructed, the only new homes built in what is essentially a fully developed community.

The Beresics' neighbors-to-be, the Backles, came four years ago from rural Pennsylvania, Alice Backle said this week.

She and her husband, Richard, didn't like Sun City when they first visited five years ago, though they did like the climate and the recreation centers.

"Everything was so close together on those little lots, with walls," she recalled.

Finally, she said, a real estate representative showed

them a 2½-acre lot in Rancho Estates, and they fell in love, designed their own house on a little knoll, and had it built to their specifications.

Many people who live in Rancho Estates are still employed, Backle said, although the area, like the rest of Sun City, is an age-restricted community. And, she said, it's a neighborhood like that she and her husband knew back east.

While the wildlife in her yard is different from what she was used to in Pennsylvania and earlier in New Jersey, it's still a pleasure to watch, Backle said.

"We have lots of rabbits, and many coyotes, though they don't come as much in summer since there is no water here for them."

Occasionally Backle has heard a ring-tailed cat — the official Arizona state animal — "hollering in the night."

She misses the deer and bear that were common back east, she said, but she doesn't miss winter. "We had too much black ice. This, even the heat of summer, is much easier on us. Richard's out playing golf right now," she said.

Communities cater to needs

By JUNE FLETCHER
From The Wall Street Journal

For 40 years while they worked and raised a family, Henry and Virginia Fox lived in the same house in River Forest, Ill.

Once they retired at 60 years old, however, it was like being shot from a gun. Suddenly addicted to travel and novelty, they moved seven times in 15 years. Nothing compelled them to move each time, except boredom. "My husband has had a quadruple bypass and we don't play golf," says Mrs. Fox. "So moving is like a hobby. We love redecorating; we keep scrapbooks for each home we've lived in. And I like unpacking — it's like Christmas."

Such stories are confounding retirement-community developers across the country. Even the granddaddy of them all, Del Webb Corp. in Phoenix, is scrapping its shuffleboard courts in favor of more modern attractions, like computer labs, weight rooms and lap pools.

That's because retirees today are completely different from the graybeards of a generation ago.

In fact, they may not even have gray beards. Voluntarily or involuntarily, middle-age Americans are suffering layoffs or taking buyouts in record numbers. "The age of people in active adult retirement communities is coming down," says Teaneck, N.J., marketing consultant William Becker. "Typically, 10 to 13

► See Developers add, A5

Retirement home glossary

Seniors may choose from a number of retirement housing options, but there's disagreement even among experts as to what to call them. Here are some definitions:

ECHO housing: Stands for "elderly cottage housing opportunities." Typically a small building with kitchen and bath facilities in the back yard of an existing house.

Independent-living facility: An age-segregated place where healthy, mobile seniors live on their own with a minimum of assistance.

Congregate-care housing: Residents still live in their own units but share centralized dining and support services.

Assisted living: Also called board and care, catered living, supervised care, personal care or residential care, this type of facility provides a room and meals, plus help as needed with bathing, dressing, getting in and out of bed and protective oversight.

Lifecare communities: In exchange for a one-time entrance fee, plus monthly fees, residents get a guarantee of assisted living, personal care and nursing care as needed.

Continuing-care community: Provides the same sort of services as lifecare, but with costs unbundled, leaving the choice of how to pay up to the resident.

Nursing home: Provides the broadest range of services, including medical, for seniors most in need of care.

From The Wall Street Journal

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Wednesday, March 20, 1996 For the record A5

Developers add modern amenities

■ From A1

percent are now under the age of 55."

These younger residents aren't necessarily ready to be put out to pasture. Rather than grab a gold watch, they may ease out of the work force over a period of several years as a part-time consultant — or may even use retirement as a springboard to a new career.

Take Iris and Irwin Fenster. He's 61 and still runs the family dry-cleaning business. She's 56 and looking for a full-time job as a bookkeeper. But they moved to Lake Ridge, an all-adult community in Toms River, N.J., because of its lavish recreational facilities and freedom from yardwork.

"When we want to retire, we won't have to move," says Mrs. Fenster.

Increasingly, older Americans want to retire in a community that offers more than endless gossip and golf. One in the planning stages is the

Hamptons of Frederick, Md., which will have an on-site executive business service, with secretarial support and teleconferencing facilities.

Clarice Uhl, 76, and her husband, Edward, 80, former Californians have purchased nine Del Webb homes within Sun City West during the past 17 years. "Some of the rooms in the earlier models were so small they seemed like closets," says Mrs. Uhl. "So each time we buy we change things, like enlarging rooms, adding windows and redoing the kitchen."

The Uhls were featured in a Daily News-Sun story in January.

On the other side of the spectrum, Americans are living longer, and in better health, than ever before. And while time eventually constrains nearly everyone's world, healthy older retirees, like the Foxes, aren't content to fish away their lives, either.

The lengthening span Americans spend in retirement is profoundly affecting housing wants and needs. After all, if you opt out at 55, you might spend as much of your adult life retired as you did working.

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, 85 percent of retirees say they don't want to move out of their current homes. But those most likely to stay put are the lowest income groups and those who live in rural areas. The wealthier and younger retirees are seeking cushier, more stimulating lives in new settings.

Del Webb, the country's eighth-largest publicly traded home builder, invented the concept of seniors-only playgrounds 36 years ago with Sun City. Their idea, then and now, was to lure equity-rich empty nesters into Sun Belt resort communities packed with activities and lavish rec

centers, where they'd stay until infirmities forced their move into living environments with more support services.

But Del Webb's internal studies show that 45 percent of their 80,000 home buyers have moved more than once, since turning 55. To keep them within Webb's web of nine communities, the company keeps upgrading its floor plans and amenities, and offering discounts to those who buy another Del Webb home.

Besides dumping old-fogy pastimes like shuffleboard, the company is incorporating elements seniors say they want, such as more room for entertaining, golf car parking, storage for sports equipment, fancy media and computer rooms, better lighting, easy-care surfaces, tighter security and "ergonomic" design that makes it easier for disabled and arthritic people to get around.

Properties moving quickly in SCW

Fewer commercial-core parcels, outside lots available

By **PATRICK O'GRADY**
Business Review

For a long time, the only thing that seemed destined for commercial property in Sun City West was the dust that settled on passing cars.

With sold signs beginning to appear as often as golf cars on the streets, commercial activity in the community has finally begun to pick up, according to Kiffie Spangler, assistant manager of community relations for the Del Webb Corp.

"They have been moving a lot faster because the community has grown," she says.

With that growth, many new developers are seeking entry into the Sun City West market to provide services like fast food and convenience shopping, Ms. Spangler says.

The boom has also been spurred by existing businesses planning for future expansion and buying property for that growth, Ms. Spangler says.

Some properties, like the Osco Drugs store at Meeker Boulevard between Wilson Way and Johnson Boulevard, are nearing completion. Osco is scheduled to open in mid-June.

Webb has sold half of its properties along Camino del Sol between Johnson and Meeker, including two lots next to the Property Owners and Residents Association site for its expansion; two near Arby's for a Dairy Queen; and two next to the Camino del Sol Funeral Home for possible expansion.

Six other lots remain available from Webb, in half- to two-acre sections.

Johnson, Hall and Beatty, an Arizona company, has purchased two lots bordered by Sandridge Drive, 138th Drive and Camino del Sol. No specific purpose for the land has been revealed, Ms. Spangler says.

Other lots within the commercial core are awaiting development or sale by other companies.

■ The Barclay Group is developing about five acres for a grocery store on the north side of Meeker Boulevard near Johnson.

Smitty's recently pulled out of the development plans and Barclay is looking for another market, according to John Waldron, manager of public relations for Webb.

■ Five acres of commercial property are available at the southwest corner of Meeker and

Camino del Sol from Johnson Commercial Real Estate.

■ Joseph Bulkelly & Co. is offering commercial property from about one to two acres within the core just north of 139th Avenue to Spanish Garden on Sandridge.

■ The Ryerson Co. is developing land on 139th Avenue next to the post office for a life-care community. It also is building condominiums between the Sundome and the Crestview Restaurant.

Outside the commercial core, Webb and privately owned properties are awaiting development. These include:

■ Property on the southeast corner of Granite Valley Drive and Johnson that was bought by Desert Golf Cars for a strip mall and service center.

■ A lot on the south side of Johnson near Grand Avenue that will be developed into a convenience store by Bro Retail Development.

■ Land on the northeast corner of 151st Avenue and Deer Valley Drive that will hold a Catholic church.

■ A site at the southeast corner of Stardust Boulevard and Echo Mesa Drive, where the Palm West

Community Church is under construction.

■ The parcel at the northwest corner of Granite Valley and Johnson, where the Sun City West Christian Church will be built.

Webb also has land available on the southwest corner of Johnson and Granite Valley; the southwest corner of Stardust and Echo Mesa; and the northeast corner of Stardust and Heritage Drive.

Broadmoor Enterprises Inc. owns two lots on the northwest corner of Beardsley Road and Stardust that are zoned for commercial uses and are still available.

The development of properties has been spurred by the marketing efforts of a national agency, Grubb and Ellis, Ms. Spangler says.

"Going with Grubb and Ellis has been one of the factors for the increased movement of properties," she says.

About 50 percent of the properties have been sold by Grubb and Ellis, she says.

The impetus to sell the properties is not affected by Webb's eventual departure from Sun City West, and the shift of operations across Grand Avenue to its next project, Sun City Grand, Ms. Spangler says.

Community

■ A two-mile stretch of cars lined Grand Avenue on Jan. 1, 1960, with passengers waiting to see the newly-opened Sun City model homes.

Family asks town to annex SC land

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

Discouraged with the slowness of an appeal to Maricopa County for a change in use of its property, a Rancho Estates family now is seeking to have its land annexed to Youngtown.

In mid-year, Algar Bush, his wife, Wilma, and other family members sought approval from the county planning and zoning commission for a special use permit that would allow them to operate a filter business from a large barn-like garage on their property on the northwest corner of 112th Avenue and Cumberland Drive.

The family owns about 5.5 acres there, in the Rancho Estates area of Sun City in which lots range from one acre upwards. The area allows higher buildings, RV parking and horses.

It was originally created by Del

Webb Corp. to accommodate people who wanted to retire to Sun City but weren't satisfied with the closeness and city-like arrangement of homes.

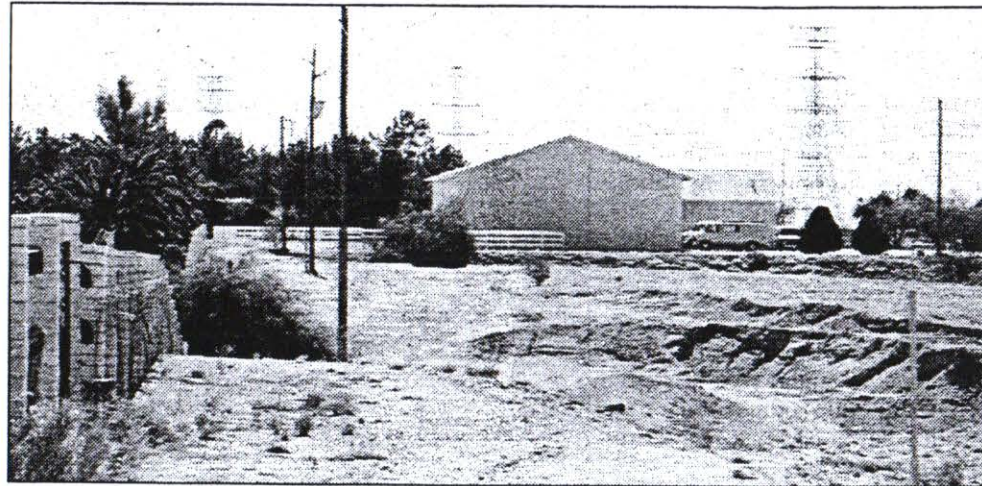
Most of the covenants, codes and restrictions in deeds that apply to much of the rest of Sun City do not apply to Rancho Estates.

But the Bush request for the special use permit has been stalled at the county since August.

So the family now has turned to Youngtown, which borders their property on two sides; according to a map of the proposed annexation prepared by the town. Wilma Bush said Saturday that the town was acting at the family's request.

Council has scheduled a public hearing on the matter for 9:30 a.m. on Oct. 31. At that meeting, members of the public may comment on whether the annexation should be completed.

Youngtown Police Chief Art Baker,



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

A Sun City couple is asking that their Rancho Estates property be annexed by Youngtown so they may operate a filter business out of a barn located on the land.

who also serves as the town's economic development director, said the annexation would be helpful to the town, giving it another business that would contribute to sales tax revenue and pay business license fees.

At the same time, the filter supply business is clean, quiet and non-polluting, he said — just the sort of business that would be desirable to have in town.

While some neighbors in Sun City may object to the annexation — and may be heard — they have no legal standing in the matter.

Because the Bush property is against the hilly Agua Fria river bed on the west, and borders another property and gully on the north in Youngtown, just south of the Baptist Village complex, access to the business still would be off 112th Avenue in Sun City.

Nov. 1, 1996

Rancho Estates neighbors balk at pending annexation

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

YOUNGTOWN — About 30 Sun Citians packed Thursday's Youngtown council meeting, most of them opposed to the town's pending annexation of about 10 acres of the Rancho Estates area of Sun City.

They are afraid that Youngtown will allow the property, owned by members of the Bush family, to continue to be used for business purposes.

The family now operates an air filter assembly and sales business from a large barn on their land. The family purchased the property about a year ago, had the barn built, and applied in July to Maricopa County

for a special use permit to continue the business. The matter has been postponed by county officials with no resolution.

Police Chief Art Baker, who also serves as the town's business development director, told council that the town staff favors the annexation for two reasons.

"It's compatible with the land just west of it" — a 160-acre tract zoned for residential and commercial use as a planned area development, and now being closely studied by several developers, Baker said.

"And it means revenue for the town," the chief said.

"Based on figures from Mr. Bush, there would be \$4,000 to \$6,000 a

year to the town in sales tax receipts," Baker said. "Mr. Bush is aware of our sales tax structure and he is willing to collect the tax. He has no problem with that."

Youngtown's sales tax is 2 percent on the receipts of almost all businesses operating within the town.

Town Attorney David Ledyard explained to council, and to about 50 people in the room, that annexation of the property would not initially change its use.

"If they are legally using the land for their business now, then they can continue to do so after an annexation," he said.

But the status of the current use,

► See Sun Citians, A5

Sun Citians oppose move

■ From A1 11-1-96

which does not meet county criteria, is somewhat murky, at least until the county acts on the request for a special-use permit.

Many of the Sun Citians, most of them neighbors in the Rancho Estates area, said they didn't want the business in their neighborhood, and that it wasn't allowed under the covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) that were placed on the land when it was originally made part of Sun City.

However, they may not be correct in that statement, since the Sun City Home Owners Association can find no CC&Rs covering the land.

Rancho Estates is west of 111th Avenue, between Peoria and Olive avenues, and, indeed, does not look like the rest of Sun City. It was originally intended to be rural-like, with larger lots, with taller

buildings and outbuildings permitted, and with horses allowed. The area is laced with public riding trails, and most lots are two or so acres in size — much larger than in other parts of Sun City.

Many of the CC&Rs differ from those elsewhere in the community.

When property in the area changes hands, the prices tend to be \$250,000 and up.

The Bush property is the largest in Rancho Estates. Its only road access is off 1112th Avenue, through Sun City.

But, while the Sun City Home Owners Association can find CC&Rs for most of Rancho Estates, it has not located any for the two parcels owned by the Bush family. They are identified on the original plat of the area as Tract D and Parcel A, while other pieces of land there are numbered as lots.

Mort Reed of the HOA told council that the Bush family

has operated a home business for years, from another site in Sun City, and that it did so with no complaints to HOA, despite CC&Rs that would have prohibited that use, he said.

"It's only now that they have moved, to an area where we can find no CC&Rs, that we are getting complaints," he said.

Council took no action on the annexation request, and no members of the Bush family spoke at the hearing, which was dominated by opponents.

Only Councilor Art Semick gave any indication he might oppose the annexation, saying, to applause, that he didn't think enough consideration was being given to Sun Citians and their objections.

Mayor Daphne Green said council would take up the matter for formal action at its November meeting late this month.

Monday, June 2, 1997

Handful of Sun City lots remain undeveloped

By BRUCE ELLISON
Staff writer

Land-owner restrictions on the use of some commercial property may be hindering the completion of Sun City, which has only a handful of vacant lots for either housing or commercial use.

Though Del Webb Corp. left the community virtually finished decades ago, several lots that could accommodate stores or offices now sit unused. Some once were service stations, an industry hard hit by mergers, consolidations and closings in the last 20 years.

Other vacant structures once were banks, also an industry in consolidation. Most of the stand-alone closed banks have been given new uses. Many of them are real estate or

medical offices, though some, in shopping centers, have turned into everything from thrift stores to carpet outlets to pack-and-mail services.

Many of the owners of the former bank offices decline to sell them to other banks, preferring to avoid setting up the competition in a nice, convenient location. That's why Washington Federal Savings Bank, for instance, is building its own branch bank on a former service station site at North Del Webb Boulevard and Thunderbird Boulevard.

It's also why some bank structures have remained empty for so long.

Washington Federal now is in temporary quarters across Del Webb Boulevard, in a building that once housed the Bank of America, then Caliber Bank, and which now is

owned by Norwest Bank — which won't sell it to Washington Federal.

It's the same thing with gas stations, whose corporate owners would prefer not to see competition move into a site they no longer use.

That is the case with the vacant lot on the southeast corner of Grand and 99th avenues. Years ago, there was a Mobil station on the lot, a station torn down a decade ago. The land has been unused ever since, and is on the market for \$289,000. Mobil still owns it, said the real estate broker handling the sale — and won't sell to another gas station operator.

That also may be the case with a former service station at Del Webb Boulevard and Talisman Road, owned by an affiliate of Unocal.

But that station may have a new owner by July, said Douglas Heckle of First Commercial Realty Advisers, the California firm brokering a sale.

Local Realtors active in the commercial market say the buyer is Circle K, which plans to open a convenience store, but a Circle K spokeswoman said she could find no one in that Phoenix-based company aware of such a pending purchase.

The asking price from Unocal is \$300,000 for the two-thirds-acre lot and building that no longer has gas tanks.

There's another restricted tract on Santa Fe Drive, behind the Midas Muffler Shop just north of 99th Avenue. Owned by the corporate parent of the Midas operations, if sold it cannot be used for a muffler or

► See Competition keeps, A5

OVER

■ From A1

brake shop, said Tom Young of Horizon Realty, the broker.

The lot, which would include a drive to the site, is about two-thirds of an acre, and priced at \$95,000, Young said — but the seller is open to all offers, he added.

Real estate industry sources in Sun City say the long-vacant service station on the southeast corner of 99th and Peoria avenues in Peoria also is about to change hands for a new use, but that could not be independently confirmed.

But a mile away, at Peoria and 107th Avenue, a former gas station site on the southwest corner sits fenced and forlorn, no use in sight.

On Santa Fe Drive, just west of the Daily News-Sun building, is about a four-acre parcel that might logically belong either to the newspaper or to Royal Oaks Life Care Center, which abut it on the east and north. But neither is interested in the property, officials said.

The land had a for-sale sign on it for two years, but the sign disappeared early in 1997, with no other information to be found.

The vacant land further west on Santa Fe Drive, west of the Boswell Hospital Thrift Shop, is owned by Sun Health and reserved for its own use, officials there said.

On the residential side, there are several unbuilt lots still available in the Rancho Estates area, west of 111th Avenue between Peoria and Olive avenues, though several homes have been started in the last 18 months.

Elsewhere, recent development has seen major residential sites occupied, both in the former Sun City stadium, 111th Avenue and the rail-

road, which now is an apartment complex, and on Palmeras Drive at Boswell Boulevard, where The Ryerson Co. just completed the Heritage Palmeras rental community.

Still available, just behind the shopping center on Bell Road that runs from Boswell Boulevard to 99th Avenue, is about three acres that could become another residential development. Zoned R-3, it is on the market for \$1 million, said two Realtors active in the commercial field. The land is owned by Standard Chartered Bank, a British institution that acquired it in a distress sale.

Denny Ryerson, whose company developed both the Heritage condominiums nearby, and Heritage Palmeras, said he hoped "something decent" goes on the property, which is visible from the windows and terraces of some of his residential properties.

"It would be nice if our people got a pleasant view," Ryerson said.

The only other residential site available is just behind the new Washington Federal Savings Bank building at North Del Webb Boulevard and Thunderbird.

The site looks like a park, and indeed is maintained by the PRIDES as a public area, but belongs to a Texas family, said Bruce Milton of Prudential Mull Smith, the broker handling its sale.

That land is zoned residential. Its best use, given the shape of the tract, would be as a small care center or apartment complex since access would be a problem for individual homes.

So far, though, no one has moved to acquire it.

Quail Run becomes 4th phase

Daily News-Sun staff

It's no secret that Sun City's first homes were built along 107th Avenue south of Grand.

It's less widely known that some of the retirement community's newest homes, built in the late 1970s, also went up south of Grand Avenue in the subdivision known as Quail Run.

Home to a nine-hole golf course and 405 houses, Quail Run is situated in the far southeast corner of Sun City, east of 99th Avenue and stretching as far south as Pebble Beach Drive. It and the residential area situated east of 99th and north of Grand are considered the fourth phase of Sun City's development.

To real estate salespeople the two final areas of Sun City to be developed were known as units 10 and 10-A, respectively.

Ken Meade, a former Del Webb Corp. salesman who now owns and operates Ken Meade Realty in Sun City, sold Jack Bromfield a home in Unit 10 in 1977. Bromfield recalled that he chose that area for a retirement home because it offered the newest homes and golf-course lots.

"I moved into it when they had just seeded the golf course," Bromfield said.

The nine-hole Quail Run golf course was rumored to have been envisioned as an 18-hole course, with half of it developed south of Grand and the other north of the busy county highway.

There's some truth to the rumor, Meade said, recalling that the split course would have required either a bridge over or a tunnel underneath Grand.

VF

REAL ESTATE

Property tax value way up

Owners take issue with assessments

By Mike McCloy
The Arizona Republic

A roaring real-estate market and a better county computer have combined to raise Valley property-tax valuations by double digits for the second straight year.

More than 1 million valuation notices hit the mail Monday. By Wednesday, telephone calls to the assessor's office had increased seven-fold, to 3,500.

One of 1,200 who have already requested packets to file appeals of their valuation is Paul Sharkey.

"This is astronomical," said Sharkey, a Phoenix Fire Department employee who lives in a 900-square-foot home in the 400 block of West Colter Street. His valuation increased 60 percent, from \$47,000 this year to \$75,500 for tax-year 2000.

"It would sell for about \$65,000 or \$70,000," Sharkey said.

So he'll research neighborhood sales and go face-to-face with

— Please see **HOMEOWNERS**, Page A2

COMMUNITIES' INCREASES

Maricopa County property value assessment hikes, from least to most.

COMMUNITY	AVG. % INCREASE
El Mirage	0.4%
Sun City West	1.4%
Sun Lakes	2.4%
Sun City	2.6%
Youngtown	4.6%
Surprise	5.2%
Avondale	6.3%
Fountain Hills	7.4%
Litchfield Park	7.5%
Peoria	7.6%
Carefree	7.9%
Goodyear	8.1%
Glendale	8.7%
Mesa	9.3%
Chandler	9.4%
Scottsdale	9.9%
Phoenix	10.0%
Buckeye	10.4%
Unincorporated	10.4%
Cave Creek	11.2%
Tolleson	11.2%
Gilbert	11.3%
Queen Creek	13.0%
Tempe	13.0%
Wickenburg	13.2%
Paradise Valley	14.5%
Gila Bend	18.5%
Guadalupe	19.9%
County total	9.1%

Source: Maricopa County Assessor's Office
The Arizona Republic

Homeowners taking issue with appraisers

— HOMEOWNERS, from Page A1

appraisers in the office of Maricopa County Assessor Kevin Ross.

"If (the assessor) can show me sales with the same lot size, square footage and condition and tell me what they sold for, we'll go with that," Sharkey said.

Ross says the total valuation of taxable property in Maricopa County is expected to hit \$161 billion, an increase of about 12 percent for the second year in a row. Homeowners are providing most of the increase.

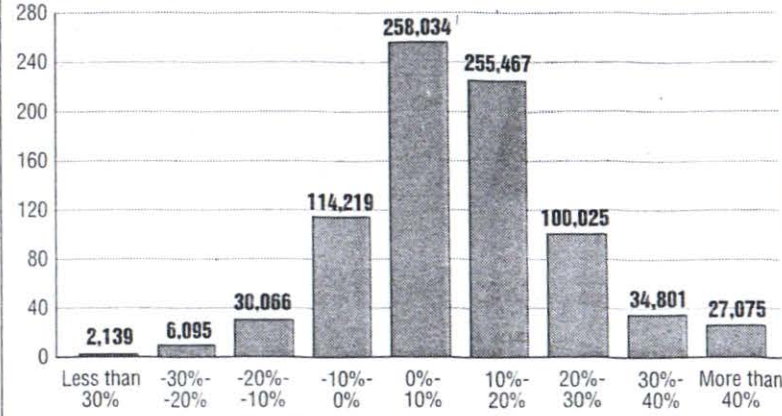
While 40,000 homes were built and prices rose 5 percent over the past year, county computers were souped up. Using 14 computer models instead of just one, county appraisers have been able to sort neighborhoods with similar economic traits, separating away the cheaper homes that had been holding down the values of more expensive ones.

"But not every value is going to be perfect," Ross said. "There are markets within neighborhoods."

That is what Sharkey's neighbor, Chuck Jones, found out this week. The value of his house jumped from \$99,900 to \$134,000 for tax-year 2000. But he says a

VALUE INCREASE, DECREASE

Distribution of change for single-family residences in Maricopa County for the current reassessment.



Source: Maricopa County Assessor's Office
The Arizona Republic

similar home across the street increased only \$400, so he will appeal.

"If values are going up in our neighborhood, why are they going up only on one side of the street?" Jones asked.

One reason is that a fourplex is mixed in with the single-family homes across Colter Street from Jones, said Jeffrey Jones, no relation, a spokesman for the assessor's office.

"These are the hardest areas to get accurate appraisals," Jeffrey Jones added. "It's not an area of cookie-cutter tract homes."

Ross invited everyone with questions to call (602) 506-3406. The more people who appeal their valuations, the better the appraisal system will be, he said.

The valuations are used by the county, cities, school districts and other local governments as a basis for tax bills that come out in

FYI

Valuation facts

Notices of Value were mailed this week to more than 1 million property owners in Maricopa County. These are not tax bills, but they will be used by local governments to set their tax rates next year for bills that are mailed in October 2000.

For an estimate of the impact of any valuation change, multiply the percentage of change by your 1998 property tax.

To appeal a valuation, call 506-3406. The call center is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays until March 5, then from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appeals must be filed with the Maricopa County Assessor within 60 days after the valuation-notice date.

October.

The expected 12 percent rise in valuation countywide could provide a \$250 million windfall to the governments even if they break tradition and do not raise tax rates, Ross said.

"This actually should lead to tax-rate reduction," Ross said. "It's an opportunity to be responsible."

Community	ZIP code	OVERALL MEDIAN PRICE (Combined new and resale homes)							MEDIAN PRICE		New homes		
		Percentage change							Resales			Change	Change
		94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	94-99	1999	1999 ³	98-99 ³	1999 ³	98-99 ³	
		Record year appears in bold face.											
Phoenix (continued)	85015	0.2%	8.7%	9.3%	9.6%	38.3%	\$89,900	\$89,900	9.6%	—	—	—	—
	85016	6.3%	8.3%	9.9%	10.2%	8.0%	50.6%	\$119,000	\$119,000	8.2%	—	—	—
	85017	6.2%	9.3%	9.6%	8.6%	10.9%	53.3%	\$76,500	\$75,000	8.8%	—	—	—
	85018	10.4%	7.2%	18.4%	8.2%	-0.3%	51.3%	\$172,500	\$172,000	-0.6%	—	—	—
	85019	3.3%	5.0%	7.7%	7.0%	12.1%	40.2%	\$84,000	\$83,000	10.8%	—	—	—
	85020	1.5%	7.3%	15.5%	-7.5%	22.9%	42.9%	\$115,500	\$116,000	26.1%	—	—	—
	85021	2.1%	4.9%	4.1%	11.7%	2.1%	27.2%	\$114,000	\$115,000	2.8%	—	—	—
	85022	8.6%	-1.2%	7.7%	2.3%	1.5%	20.0%	\$138,000	\$140,000	3.1%	\$125,000	-10.2%	—
	85023	15.2%	4.9%	-7.5%	8.7%	2.0%	23.9%	\$120,000	\$120,000	4.3%	—	—	—
	85024	10.8%	8.6%	6.4%	4.4%	9.4%	46.2%	\$142,174	\$127,600	10.5%	\$161,943	14.8%	—
	85027	14.6%	6.0%	7.2%	2.4%	8.7%	45.0%	\$106,300	\$102,500	10.2%	\$116,127	4.2%	—
	85028	11.9%	4.6%	5.8%	6.4%	3.5%	36.5%	\$154,230	\$154,230	3.5%	—	—	—
	85029	6.3%	9.5%	3.5%	1.1%	6.7%	30.1%	\$95,000	\$95,000	6.7%	—	—	—
	85031	5.2%	6.9%	11.8%	8.9%	10.4%	51.3%	\$74,000	\$74,000	10.4%	—	—	—
	85032	7.1%	1.5%	5.5%	9.0%	7.9%	35.0%	\$123,500	\$119,800	5.7%	—	—	—
	85033	3.7%	7.0%	6.0%	10.1%	8.6%	40.6%	\$75,900	\$75,900	8.6%	—	—	—
	85035	5.5%	10.0%	9.1%	8.5%	12.3%	54.3%	\$73,000	\$73,000	12.3%	—	—	—
	85037	3.4%	4.4%	2.5%	2.4%	6.0%	20.1%	\$90,100	\$88,900	7.0%	\$97,315	8.1%	—
	85040	-0.2%	13.1%	4.3%	11.0%	13.3%	48.1%	\$90,500	\$84,000	6.8%	—	—	—
	85041	9.7%	5.6%	12.4%	8.6%	12.1%	58.4%	\$65,000	\$65,000	12.1%	—	—	—
	85043	17.3%	7.8%	8.1%	3.7%	7.1%	51.8%	\$74,400	\$72,000	3.6%	—	—	—
	85044	2.8%	4.0%	5.4%	8.0%	4.1%	26.6%	\$154,000	\$154,000	5.9%	—	—	—
	85045	13.1%	4.1%	9.9%	-3.1%	-17.7%	3.2%	\$191,530	—	—	\$184,082	-20.4%	—
	85048	0.5%	-1.5%	4.6%	4.9%	-1.3%	7.2%	\$176,000	\$181,500	0.8%	\$136,972	-3.4%	—
	85050	10.2%	3.3%	7.7%	-3.8%	5.6%	24.6%	\$147,204	\$154,000	11.7%	\$133,166	-5.5%	—
	85051	5.6%	8.0%	2.5%	2.4%	8.2%	29.6%	\$92,000	\$92,000	8.2%	—	—	—
	85053	7.2%	3.6%	1.8%	5.1%	6.3%	26.3%	\$98,900	\$98,900	6.3%	—	—	—
	85086	2.1%	1.3%	6.7%	3.2%	9.0%	24.1%	\$179,900	\$179,900	12.4%	—	—	—
	85254 ²	13.1%	12.6%	1.3%	5.3%	1.5%	37.9%	\$199,900	\$200,300	8.3%	\$190,517	-15.7%	—
Queen Creek	85242	12.3%	-0.1%	13.7%	-0.5%	10.6%	40.4%	\$165,000	—	—	—	—	—
Sun Lakes	85248 ²	1.0%	12.4%	2.0%	5.7%	8.2%	32.4%	\$179,053	\$165,000	5.8%	\$184,830	9.5%	—
Scottsdale	85250	-0.4%	12.8%	9.4%	3.4%	8.5%	37.9%	\$162,750	\$162,750	11.1%	—	—	—
	85251	17.8%	8.5%	1.3%	10.3%	14.8%	63.9%	\$147,500	\$143,000	11.3%	—	—	—
	85254 ²	13.1%	12.6%	1.3%	5.3%	1.5%	37.9%	\$199,900	\$200,300	8.3%	\$190,517	-15.7%	—
	85255	11.9%	2.2%	3.6%	3.1%	17.6%	43.6%	\$304,773	\$325,000	16.1%	\$282,007	14.0%	—
	85257	7.2%	5.8%	10.8%	11.7%	7.8%	51.2%	\$124,000	\$124,000	7.8%	—	—	—
	85258	14.1%	1.6%	8.0%	7.0%	11.0%	48.6%	\$272,000	\$250,000	6.9%	—	—	—
	85259	9.3%	5.6%	3.1%	2.7%	13.2%	38.3%	\$306,855	\$335,000	11.7%	\$263,384	8.3%	—
	85260	12.1%	0.9%	3.1%	7.9%	6.4%	34.0%	\$231,500	\$230,000	5.0%	—	—	—
	85262	11.2%	8.4%	-1.5%	9.5%	5.4%	37.0%	\$342,956	\$339,193	4.4%	\$348,484	7.1%	—
Tempe	85281	13.2%	5.2%	9.9%	6.7%	14.2%	59.6%	\$108,500	\$107,500	13.2%	—	—	—
	85282	6.9%	8.6%	4.9%	9.5%	8.6%	44.8%	\$126,000	\$125,000	8.7%	—	—	—
	85283 ²	4.6%	1.8%	1.7%	6.9%	6.8%	23.6%	\$133,500	\$134,150	7.3%	—	—	—
	85284	9.6%	3.9%	11.6%	8.0%	14.4%	57.1%	\$226,900	\$200,000	7.5%	\$308,606	17.9%	—
Sun City	85351	9.8%	1.2%	4.7%	1.1%	2.8%	20.9%	\$92,500	\$92,500	2.8%	—	—	—
Sun City area	85373	6.7%	4.7%	2.3%	6.6%	0.9%	23.0%	\$120,500	\$114,000	3.6%	\$130,000	-2.3%	—
Surprise area	85374	-1.3%	-0.3%	15.7%	5.5%	7.2%	28.7%	\$129,145	\$116,500	3.1%	\$131,783	8.2%	—
Sun City West area	85375	4.1%	5.4%	-1.2%	-6.7%	4.5%	5.7%	\$138,000	\$138,000	-0.7%	—	—	—
Wickenburg area	85390	-16.7%	49.4%	-10.8%	25.0%	-8.0%	27.8%	\$138,000	\$138,000	-8.0%	—	—	—
Youngtown	85363	0.0%	5.6%	15.8%	9.1%	8.3%	44.4%	\$65,000	\$65,000	8.3%	—	—	—

- 1999 sales data are through November. 2 - ZIP code also appears in another community. 3 - Omitted data indicate fewer than 50 homes were purchased for the period.

Home resales set records in Valley

May 14, 2000

BUY NOW:

Median price rises with rate increase fears

EDWARD GATELY and GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The threat of higher interest rates in coming months may have helped make April the strongest month this year for home resales in the Valley.

Last month, 4,870 resales were reported in the Phoenix metropolitan area, as well as a new record median resale price of \$128,000, according to the Arizona Real Estate Center at the Arizona State University College of Business.

Previously, March was the strongest month this year, with 4,735 resales and a median resale price of \$127,000. The median resale price for the first quarter was \$124,000.

"While rates have moved up, they are still very attractive," said Jay Butler, center director. "People moved aggressively before higher rates and home prices might exclude them from the market. In addition, the market has been increasingly dominated by higher-priced homes where affordability might not be as restrictive on the home buyer."

Butler said the growing issue of affordability, with higher interest rates and increasing home prices, will affect the future direction of the local housing market.

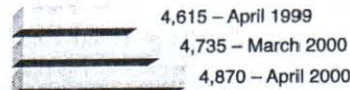
Through April, 17,240 homes have been sold in the Valley, compared to 16,650 during the same period in 1999.

Alice Martin, executive vice president of the Arizona Association of Realtors, said it's likely many people who bought homes

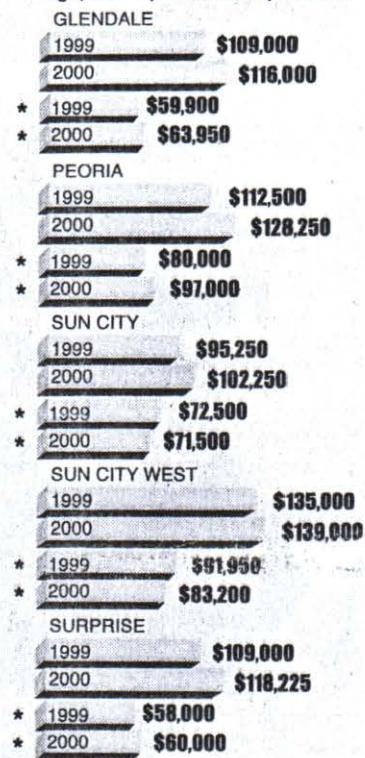
West Valley home sales

The West Valley home resale market improved in contrast to April 1999.

☐ Single-family home resales, Valleywide:



☐ Median sales activity in the West Valley increased compared to a year ago, from April 1999 to April 2000:



SOURCE: Arizona State University DAILY NEWS-SUN

last month did so in anticipation of higher interest rates.

"I would think people would be looking real hard at it if they're looking at all," she said. "April and this time of year are pretty strong anyway, as people approach the summer and moves

are being planned."

These individual West Valley submarkets reported the following activity last month:

- Sun City improved from 110 resales in April 1999 to 125 resales last month.

- Sun City West remained at 110 resales, but experienced an increase in median sales price.

- The townhouse/condominium resale market in Sun City decreased from 110 resales in April 1999 to 95 last month.

- The townhouse/condominium resale market in Sun City West increased from 25 resales in April 1999 to 30 last month.

- Glendale improved from 395 resales in April 1999 to 445 resales last month.

More people are getting priced out of the market as interest rates climb because a .5 percent increase adds about \$51 per month to the average mortgage of \$150,000, said Dan Frahm, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage spokesman.

"Resales have continued to be very strong, and overall what we consider purchase activity has been very strong," he said. "The most dramatic impact of the rates increasing over the past year has been a steady drop in the amount of refinance volume we've had. That has dropped steadily since 1998, when there was an enormous rush for American home buyers to refinance."

Consumers should keep in mind that interest rates remain well below previous averages, such as 16.6 percent in 1981, 10 percent in 1990 and 9.2 percent in 1995, Frahm said.

"So when we're talking in the neighborhood of 8 percent or 8.5 percent, we're really still at a point that makes home ownership very affordable," he said. "Home buyers should not look at the rate movement and just assume that they are priced out of the market. There are more products available than ever for home buyers to still achieve that dream."

See Rates remain, A5

Daily News-Sun • **Consumer News** • Thursday, Aug. 31, 2000

Price of resale homes dips

SUN CITIES: New developments keep house costs down in retirement communities

JOHN GUZZON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Resale-home prices in Sun City and Sun City West dropped in the last year despite soaring prices in the rest of the Valley, an Arizona State University study revealed this week.

The median resale price for Sun City homes in July 2000 was \$91,000 — \$1,000 less than in July 1999, said Dr. Jay Butler of

the Arizona Real Estate Center at Arizona State University.

Sun City West homes sold at an average price of \$137,000 in July 2000, down from \$143,700 a year earlier.

Richard Ritzwoller of Ken Meade Realty said the decrease might be indicative of a slowdown in this area.

"We are experiencing a bit of a slowdown in Sun City and Sun City West, but it is because of the developers out here. Del Webb is doing such a great job with Sun City Grand, and all of the other developers are also selling big numbers of homes. All of that takes away from the resale market," he said. "But, we look forward to better times with the

Baby Boomers on the way."

The ASU study created an affordability index based on home prices, interest rates and incomes. Home prices and interest rates are rising much faster than incomes, ASU found, putting the affordability index at its lowest level in more than a decade.

One year ago, a household earning an annual income of \$35,040 could afford the median-priced resale home. Now a family would have to earn \$41,700. Census Bureau statistics show that in 1995, median household income in Maricopa County was approximately \$37,000.

The median price of a resale home in Maricopa County hit

\$130,000 in the second quarter, up almost \$6,000 from the first quarter. The monthly payment on such a home would be about \$1,000.

In Surprise, which includes Sun City Grand, median prices went from \$113,000 to \$119,000. In Glendale, prices jumped from \$109,500 in 1999 to \$120,000 in 2000. Median Peoria resale-home prices climbed from \$112,000 in 1999 to \$123,500.

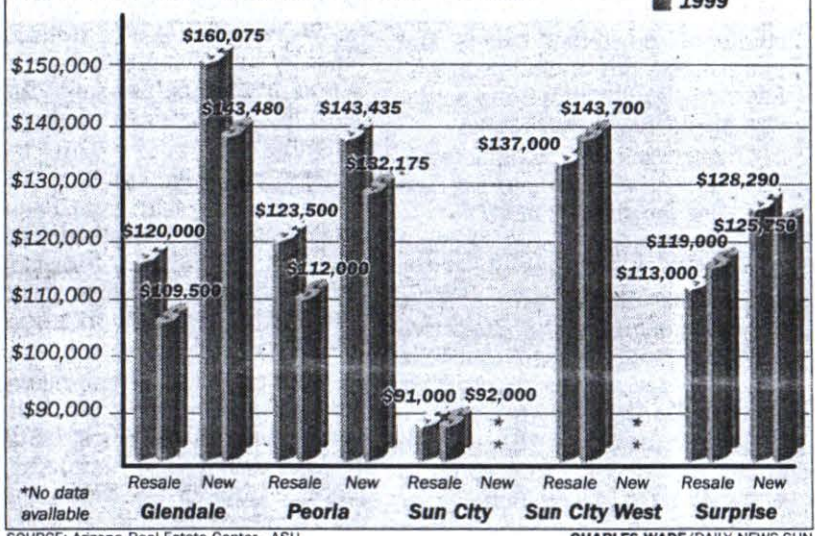
Resale home affordability fell to its lowest level since the mid-1980s and new-home affordability to its lowest level since 1995.

Butler said West Valley home prices are still lower than those

See Home prices, A5

(OVER)

West Valley Median Home Prices in July



SOURCE: Arizona Real Estate Center - ASU
CHARLES WADE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

From A1

in the East Valley, but in time that could change.

"Prices in the West Valley tend to be a bit lower because the strengthening of the West Valley started only about a year ago," he said.

Rising prices have not scared off all home buyers, he said, but instead persuaded those who can to buy now. These eager home buyers bid up prices for the market as a whole.

"Even in the face of declining affordability, the ever-confident consumer is driving the Greater Phoenix housing market to unexpected levels of performance," he said.

Sun City Grand is one aspect of the increasing demand. Ryan Peterson of Del Webb said the developer has been selling about 1,000 homes each year since the inception of the master planned community in 1996. He said the average price is about \$182,000 — slightly higher than 1996.

Families who are moving into more expensive homes, known as

the "move-up market," are the dominant force in home sales, Butler said.

Jobs abound in the Valley, he said, so consumers are confident in the future and willing to make big purchases.

In addition, the area housing market offers attractive interest rates — just under 8 percent — and a good selection of homes to choose from.

"People are looking at this as a darn good time to buy," he said. "I'm not sure there can ever be a better time."

Steve Capobres, director of the Arizona Housing Commission, said affordable housing is a local issue that needs local solutions.

"The last thing we want to see is a California market developed here where people have to drive a hundred miles to work," he said. "We're trying to create a community that's diverse, that supports the work force and accepts everybody."

John Guzzon can be reached at jguzzon@aztrib.com or by calling 876-2511. Tribune writer James A. Ahlers contributed to this report.

Sun Cities can weather Boomer disdain

12-28-00



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

John Busse is remodeling and expanding his Sun City Phase I home, doing some of the preparatory work himself.

Non-Boomers already expand horizons

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

In his early 60s, John Busse says he isn't as old as many of his neighbors in the area off Alabama Avenue in the early parts of Sun City.

And he's a decade too old to be a Baby Boomer.

But he's remodeling and expanding the house he and his wife bought four years ago, saying "We are going to be awhile, and we thought we ought to have it the way we want it."

The Busses, from Missouri, bought the Sun City home as a place to winter but eventually decided the expense and trouble of being a two-home family wasn't worth the effort.

"So last June, we sold the old place and moved down here permanently," Busse said as he labored over the dirt he was shoveling to get ready to pour concrete.

He's adding a master-bedroom suite with bath, enlarging the Arizona room, turning a one-car carport into a two-car garage and adding storage space. The fact that his home at 10835 Alabama Ave.

is on a corner lot gave him a little extra space for the expansion, he said. And he's hardly alone.

"Across the way, some of our friends who also are younger have redone their house" while a couple of blocks further west, a once-small house has almost doubled in size over the last few months.

"I don't know if we'll ever get back what we're paying for all this," Busse said, "But when it's done it'll be the way we want it, so we can live in it the way we want to."

Real estate experts say more of that remodeling and expansion will occur in the older areas of Sun City as Boomers arrive, or as investors buy the properties and improve them for renting.

Busse said his home, when complete, probably will be a \$100,000 house. And he said the family could have purchased an updated, more modern, larger or newer structure in Sun City West or Sun City Grand, "but we didn't want to. After the winter visits, we grew to know and like our neighbors here, and this is where we wanted to stay."

OLDER HOMES: Upgrading and remodeling will become dominant

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Will retiring Baby Boomers come to Sun City?

The 71 million people born between 1946 and 1964 make up the largest generation in American history.

And their values, desires and preferences are different from those of current Sun Citians, most of whom remember the Great Depression of the '30s and the struggles of World War II.

Boomers are more affluent with more working spouses, have more children, may be caring for dependent parents, and in several surveys have said they probably won't want to live in age-restricted communities.

But that shouldn't worry people now in Sun City, said Steve Meade, manager of Ken Meade Realty, the area's largest reseller of local homes.

"I doubt the (real estate) market will slow because Boomers don't want to come," he said.

Other buyers still will find the area attractive, and even if only a small portion of Boomers prefer a Sun City home, that small proportion is more than enough to fill vacancies as they occur.

When Sun City and its newer cousins Sun City West and Sun City Grand were built by Del Webb Corp., homes went up at the rate of dozens a week. If the model you wanted wasn't already on the ground, it could be built for you. But Sun City and Sun City West now are complete communities with no new homes available and no room for expansion.

So newcomers will have to

OVER

take what's on the market, said Jay Butler, director of the Arizona Real Estate Center at Arizona State University in Tempe.

"One of the big issues you'll face is that some of your housing stock there is 40 years old and well aged," Butler said.

Some may not have been maintained in their last years, as residents' health declined and their resources disappeared. Many homes in Phase I, the area south of Grand Avenue, could hardly be considered modern and need work, he said. "Rehabilitation and revitalization of that existing stock will be an ongoing issue."

Butler asked whether Boomers, who generally have more current income and more wealth than present residents — and so have more housing options open — will want to take an older Sun City home when they can get a newer home in Sun City West, or a brand-new house in Sun City Grand.

"Does the Boomer who wants to live in an upscale, active-adult community want a rehab job?" he asked. "I don't know."

Some likely will, he said. And others, interested in a rental investment, may buy the houses and upgrade them to rent to Boomers. That can be profitable at the relatively low prices some older, unmodernized Sun City homes now command, he said.

Sun City does have some things going for retirees despite its age, Butler said.

"It's seen as safe, as neat and clean and as inexpensive, and that has appeal for those who don't want to have a fancy place in retirement," he said.

Many of the homes, once remodeled, are low-maintenance affairs, Butler said, "so they may be of value to the person who has an RV, or who wants to spend only a few months a year in Arizona and travel."

One problem for travelers is the

carport and small garage areas in some homes. In many places the areas are too small or too low to accommodate a conversion van. New deed restrictions prohibit any van with living quarters (meaning cooking, bath or sleeping areas) from being parked in driveways.

Those who may want to rehabilitate homes also should consider whether other homes are being worked on, so the entire neighborhood is upgraded. That improves overall values, while a single home that stands out from nearby structures doesn't sell for as much as it may have cost.

Still, like Steve Meade, Butler sees a place "for some retirees who want a simpler life, a smaller house, a step down — and for them, older Sun City homes can be appealing."

In a 1995 study for the Sun City Home Owners Association, researchers found that

considerable upgrading was under way in Phase I. Now, just driving down residential streets in Phase II, it's obvious considerable work is going on there too.

"Early buyers in Sun City wanted a house to live out their lives in," Butler said.

Most of them hadn't moved a lot in their careers.

"The current crop of retirees, including Boomers, is much more mobile, and may not look on Sun City as their last home," Butler added. "They will live longer and be more active."

What are homes worth?

In late 2000, the typical single-family or duplex home in Phase I and II in Sun City sold for about \$80,000; in Phase III, north of Bell Road, with bigger newer homes, it was more like \$115,000.

In Sun City West, where homes are newer still and larger, the typical price was \$125,000.

In Sun City Grand in Surprise, a median-priced new Del Webb home sells for \$175,000.

• Saturday, March 3, and Sunday, March 4, 2001

Prices signal buyer's market in Sun Cities

HOME SALES: Number of for-sale signs likely to climb

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Home prices in the Sun Cities are plummeting in the midst of the largest housing glut in a decade and, says one real estate agent, the buyer's market won't end any time soon.

David Nichols, a broker for Century 21 in Sun City, said the Sun Cities home market hasn't dropped to this level since 1991. Nichols said there are more than 1,900 homes available on the Sun Cities selling block.

"You are seeing a drop in prices," he said.

The number of "for sale" signs is likely to grow because Del Webb Corp. is continuing to build about 1,000 homes a year in Sun City Grand.

When that community is completed in four to five years, it will have 9,700 homes with a population of about 17,000, said Ryan Peterson, public relations director for Del Webb's Sun City Grand.

"If you look at Sun City Grand sales, they are one-half of what they were last

year," he said. "There is an impact."

With other senior communities cropping up around the nation, the Sun Cities are trying to attract seniors with one advantage other states can't match, but they're still feeling the pinch.

"Weather is still the factor," said Jack Martin of the Sun City Area Realtors Association. Martin said many people will retire where they are living, but mild winters are still attracting some newcomers to Sun City.

While no more homes can be built in Sun City and Sun City West, there still is an overabundance of homes on the market. And even as new houses continue to be built in Sun City Grand, some existing homes there remain vacant due to other retirement communities cropping up in other parts of the nation.

Martin said vacancy rates in the Sun Cities fluctuate between 1,600 and 2,000 homes depending on the time of year.

Part of the problem, he said, is the impact of other retirement communities that cropped up in past years. Fewer and fewer winter visitors are calling Arizona their winter home and are moving to those communities instead.

Over the last three years,

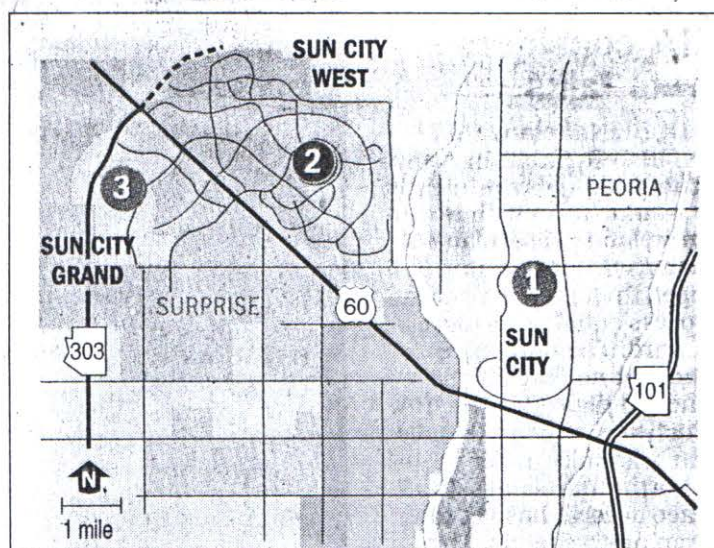
that homeowners who want to sell immediately will have to lower their asking prices.

"It's a cycle," Nichols said, adding that he has seen several cycles during his real estate career.

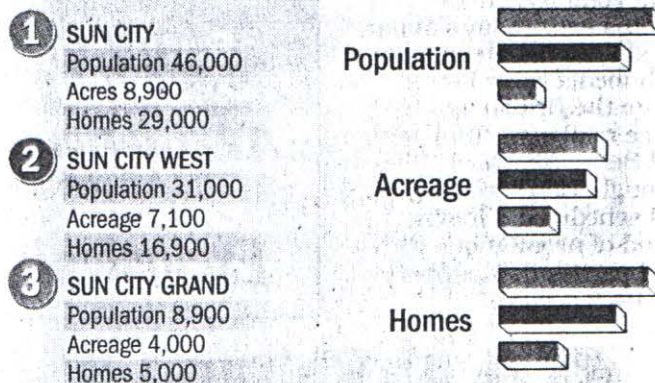
The communities' populations stand at 46,000 in Sun City, 31,000 in Sun City West, and 8,900 in Sun City Grand, according to Peterson.

Sun City Grand is expected to be built out in four to five years.

Statistics from the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce show Sun City's population increasing by about 8,000 since 1990, while Sun City West has seen its population go up by 16,000 residents during the same period.



Sun Cities population



the number of winter visitors in Arizona has dropped from 300,000 to 200,000 part-time residents.

"It is now a buyer's market," Nichols said.

When looking at the 2000 market compared to the 1999 market, the difference in all the homes not selling is about \$10 million, Nichols said.

And that trend is continuing for homeowners who are trying to sell now; 55 out of every 100 homes that are put

on the market are not being purchased within six months, Nichols said.

"It's going up constantly," he said. "It's supply and demand, and our supply is exceeding our demand."

As proof, Nichols pointed to homes Del Webb built three years ago that are unoccupied.

"The only thing that will correct this is if the sellers recognize there is a new marketplace," he said, adding

Jay Butler of the Arizona State University Real Estate Center, said the average price of a home in Sun City is \$102,000 while homes in Sun City West are averaging about \$150,000. Figures were not available for Sun City Grand.

Butler pointed out that the Sun City resale market improved from 80 to 115 homes over last year, while Sun City West resale activity dropped from 100 to 60. He added that statistics for the past few years are not available.

Michael Maresch can be reached at mmaresch@aztrib.com or at 623-876-2521.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT SEPT. 5-11, 2001

IS SUN CITY'S LUSTER FADING?

Stagnating property values pose problem

(Editor's note: This is the first in a three-part series on Sun City's property values and potential challenges facing the community.)

By **MIKE RUSSO**
Independent Newspapers

For more than 40 years the sun has shone brightly on Sun City but has the glow begun to fade?

Sun City has enjoyed a glorious ride over the last 40 years but some people believe the end of the line is approaching unless some changes are made.

Joanna Condé, owner of Condé Appraisal Associates in Sun City and an appraiser in Sun City for 12 years, thinks stagnating property values in Sun City are a warning signal for future generations.

"Sun City property values are stagnating, if changes are not made now, myriad problems will crop up," she says.

"Unless action is taken to reverse the trend, there will be a downward spiral first in home values, which will be followed by both economic and social decline," she maintains.

She explains that lower-priced homes attract lower-income buy-



Photo by MIKE RUSSO/Independent Newspapers

Sold signs are not cropping up frequently enough in the Sun Cities, according to real estate appraiser Joanna Condé.

ers and Sun City would then be viewed as a "low-income senior community."

Attracting lower-income homeowners would have a deleterious affect on the community's reliance on volunteers. "Lower-income buyers have less money to contribute to

volunteer organizations," Ms. Condé says.

Also, homeowners with lower incomes would have less money to spruce up Sun City's aging homes, further retarding the increase in property values.

Those same homeowners would also have less money to spend with local merchants, thereby jeopardizing that segment of the community, she notes.

Ms. Condé has compiled a rather comprehensive analysis of property values in Sun City in which she notes that the median single-family home price in Sun City has risen 2.7 percent between 1997 and 2000, from \$93,500 to \$96,150. Conversely, median prices of homes in the metropolitan Phoenix area jumped 22 percent during the same period, from \$105,000 to \$128,000, she noted.

Home value comparisons

Median resale values for single-family homes

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Sun City	\$88,630	93,500	94,000	95,500	96,150
Sun City West	134,000	140,000	147,000	138,500	136,000
Youngtown	48,500	55,450	62,000	65,000	73,200
Westbrook Village	139,900	149,900	152,250	154,000	165,500
Ventana Lakes	117,835	128,900	130,000	133,700	135,750
Sun Lakes	140,049	143,550	156,039	165,089	178,000
Metro Phoenix	97,000	105,000	113,585	120,000	128,900

Source: Condé Appraisal Associates and azcentral.com

See ■ VALUES, Page 9

OVER

This stagnation is not unique to Sun City, according to Ms. Condé. It also affects Sun City West and Sun City Grand in Surprise.

"Sun City West values have steadily declined from a high of \$147,000 in 1998 to a low of \$135,000 at the end of July 2001," she says.

Ms. Condé reports Sun City Grand has experienced a drop in median values from \$170,000 in 1998 to \$163,000 in 2000, a decline of 4 percent. However, a Del Webb Development Co. official contests that contention.

John Waldron, Del Webb's regional director of public affairs, said the comparison of 21 resales in 1998, when Sun City Grand was in its infancy, to 156 resales in 2000 is not legitimate. "Twenty-one homes was not a large enough sample for comparison," he says.

"Our resales market has been

strong and we are not reporting any major dips in resale values," Mr. Waldron says. "Our new home prices are continuing to go up and that would raise the median market prices on resales. The market remains strong in Sun City Grand."

Ms. Condé notes Sun City and Sun City West have suffered in comparison with such retirement communities as Westbrook Village in Peoria and Sun Lakes.

During the period 1997 to 2000, median prices of resale homes in Westbrook Village rose from \$149,900 to \$165,500, according to Ms. Condé.

In the east Valley, the median values of homes in Sun Lakes, a Robson community founded in 1972, have risen more than 25 percent, from \$143,350 in 1997 to \$178,000 in 2000.

However, it is the skyrocketing property values in Youngtown that

has most gotten Ms. Condé's attention.

Youngtown's median resale values have risen from \$55,450 in 1997 to \$73,200 in 2000, a increase of 32.01 percent. And that median resale value rose another \$8,800 to reach \$92,000 by the end of July 2001.

The rapid advance in median price is attributed to Youngtown's loss of its age-restricted status following an attorney general's ruling in 1998. That opened up the community to residency by people of any age and expanded the market of potential buyers. Ms. Condé believes relaxing Sun City's age requirements to some degree could jump-start Sun City's home sales in a similar fashion.

"Property values have risen in Youngtown since the loss of the age overlay. It seems like home sales have done well," reports Mayor

Daphne Green.

The Sun Cities stagnating property values pose several potential problems and affect everyone in the community, says Ms. Condé.

In addition to the detrimental affect on voluntarism, Ms. Condé cites other potential problems.

"Lower values mean less money received upon resale; money that may be needed for healthcare" she remarks.

"Lower values means less equity, equity that could be used for income through reverse mortgages," she continues.

"Stagnating selling prices affect every area of life the Sun Cities from the upkeep of homes and the recreational facilities to the number of volunteers," Ms. Condé says.

(Proposed solutions will be discussed in the next installment of the series.)

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2002

County encourages senior citizens to apply for freeze on property values

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE: 2003 valuations are to be mailed to homeowners Feb. 7

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

With property valuations increasing for 2003, the Maricopa County Assessor's Office is encouraging qualifying Sun Citizens to apply for a freeze under the Senior Home Ownership Protection Act.

Sun City Grand's median sale price of homes was the highest among the three Sun City retirement communities, with a median 2001 sale price of \$170,437, followed by Sun City West at \$134,125 and Sun City at \$97,000, according to the 2003 valuations.

The median change for 2003 from 2001 in percentage figures for Sun City is 5.9 percent, Sun City West, 10.5 percent and Sun City Grand, 13 percent.

Valuations will be mailed to homeowners on Feb. 7.

Already taking advantage of the senior home ownership act are 1,874 Sun City homeowners and 643 Sun City West homeowners, said Maricopa County Deputy Assessor Jim Meulmans.

Meulmans said the assessor's office changes the property tax values of homes every two years.

"From a tax change, the largest would be from the county," he said, adding that exact dollar amounts and savings are not yet known. The exact figures will be released in

From A1

February.

"Until the tax rates are set, we cannot say what the changes will be from this valuation," he said.

Meulmans said the assessor's office is expecting more seniors to apply for the valuation freeze for 2003. The deadline to apply is Oct. 1.

"We are still expecting more seniors to register for this as word of mouth gets out," he said. "There is an expectation to have more seniors apply."

Qualifying senior citizens across the state can apply to freeze their property

valuations if they meet the following criteria:

- They are older than 65.
- They have lived in their homes for more than three years.
- They make less than \$25,440 per year as an individual or less than \$31,800 as a couple.
- They do not sell their residences.

For more information, the Maricopa County Assessor's Office can be contacted at 602-506-7220.

Michael Maresch can be reached at mmaresch@aztrib.com or at 623-876-2513.

See 2003 valuations, A5

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

JAN. 23-29, 2002

Sun Cities property valuations rise less than county average

Sun City's values go up 5.9 percent; Sun City West increase is 10.5

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

It is a case of good news, bad news for property owners in the Sun Cities.

Property valuations for 2003 will be going up 5.9 percent in Sun City and 10.5 percent in Sun City, Kevin Ross, Maricopa County assessor, announced last week. In Sun City Grand, located in the city of Surprise, the value will go up 13 percent.

The median sales price of homes in Sun City in 2001 was

\$97,000. In Sun City West, the median sales price was \$134,125, and in Sun City Grand it was \$170,437. The reason for the considerably higher sales price in Sun City Grand is the community is still selling new homes, whereas Sun City and Sun City West have only resale homes.

That is the bad news.

The good news, despite the increase, the valuation rise in

the Sun Cities is lower than the county average.

Countywide, property values will take an average 15.5 percent hike next year, according to Mr. Ross.

Sun Lakes, also a retirement community like Sun City and Sun City West, experienced the smallest appreciation in valuation, 0.9 percent, Mr. Ross said.

"Sun City assessments will remain low because there is such a large volume of sales and turnover in homes," Mr. Ross said. "You can drive down the street and see many homes with for sale signs out front.

"When you have a senior community, you limit your market of available buyers," the continued.

Mr. Ross also noted that Sun City lags behind the other two communities in the per capita number of building permits for remodeling projects.

"Remodeling going on in Sun

City is not as dramatic as other areas," Mr. Ross said.

Another reason for Sun City's smaller increase is the 1,874 households that have qualified to have their valuations frozen under terms of Proposition 104.

To qualify for the program, one of the property's owners, living in the house, must be at least 65 years of age, the house must be the primary residence and the owners must have lived in the home for at least two years. Annual income must not exceed \$25,440 for a single person or \$31,800 for couples. Residents would have to reapply for the exemption every three years — to determine if there has been a change in status.

In Sun City West, 643 households qualified to have valuations frozen, Mr. Ross noted.

"This was the first year of the program and we expect the number of qualifiers to double," Mr. Ross said.

See ■ VALUES, Page 9

Home resales slip a tad in Sun Cities

MEDIAN PRICE :
Up 11.7 percent
in Sun City

BRIAN POWELL
DAILY NEWS-SUN

11/19/02

Resales of Sun City and Sun City West homes decreased in October compared to the same month a year ago, while overall Valley sales have continued on a record pace.

The figures were released this week by the Arizona Real Estate Center at Arizona State University as part of a Greater Phoenix resale market report.

Valleywide, sales were up in

October from the same time last year and the 2002 year-to-date total is ahead of last year's record pace, according to the report.

In Sun City, the resales decreased last month to 105 from 115 in October 2001. In Sun City West, the number of resales dropped from 105 in October 2001 to 90 last month.

Of these sales, the median price in Sun City rose to \$107,750 from \$96,500, an increase of 11.7 percent. In Sun City West, the median sales price decreased slightly from \$150,000 to \$149,700, according to the report.

Jay Butler, director of the real estate center, said the Sun Cities small number of sales will cause the data to fluctuate from month to month.

"The median values go up and down — they bounce all over the place," Butler said.

For example, Sun City's median sales price in September was \$97,000, which was lower than the \$102,000 in September 2001 and \$107,750 last month. In Sun City West, the opposite occurred. The September 2001 median value was \$129,950, while this year's September value was \$150,000.

October townhome and

condominium sales increased in Sun City from 75 to 90, with the median price up as well, from \$71,000 to \$75,000. In Sun City West, the number of sales remained at 30, but the median price increased from \$89,750 in October 2001 to \$96,000 this year.

In Surprise, there were 100 resales in October with a median value of \$136,000, up from 60 and \$115,000, respectively, in October 2001. Meanwhile, 290 new homes were sold in Surprise last month.

"That market is basically a brand new market," Butler said. "We saw this in Gilbert and others for awhile, then it flip flops in a few years."

In Peoria, home resales increased from 210 in October 2001 to 250 last month. The median price rose slightly, from \$136,700 to \$138,000. In Glendale, home resales increased from 480 in October 2001 to 510 last month. The median price also increased from \$126,360 to \$135,000.

Valleywide, home resales increased to 5,380 last month from 4,860 in October 2001. However, this October's total was down from 5,715 in September, which Butler attributes to the upcoming holiday season. The Valley's October median sales price was \$147,000, up from \$136,900 a year ago.

This year, there have been 52,230 home resales through October, compared with 52,100 resales at the same time a year ago.

A key driver of home sales all year has been low-mortgage interest rates, which have hovered around 6 percent for weeks, the lowest in more than 30 years.

"A lot of people are deciding this is the time to do it," Butler said. "I think we'll have another record year."

Low financing rates and continued uncertainty on Wall Street has many people turning to the real estate market for investments, vacation homes and first homes. Also, an increase in the Valley's population has fueled home sales, Butler said.

Michelle Swafford contributed to this article.

County nixes asphalt ramps

SUN CITY: Residents told drainage is hindered

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

If Maricopa County has its way, Jim Bley says, he won't be able to go up or down his Sun City driveway.

He and nine neighbors on Tarrytown Avenue paid \$125 each to create sloping asphalt ramps from the street to their driveways, allowing Bley — who has been in a wheelchair about 60 years because of polio — to cross the street to visit with neighbors.

County officials, however, say the contractor who installed the 10 ramps did so without permits, and the curbs on the ramps will block water flow, eroding the street.

"A few years ago, Maricopa County ... put in a few hundred thousand dollars worth of new roads in everything south of Peoria (Avenue)," said Frank Urquiza, a county

public-works supervisor.

To protect the roads, the county is requiring the Tarrytown residents to remove the asphalt ramps, or the county will remove them and bill the residents, Urquiza said.

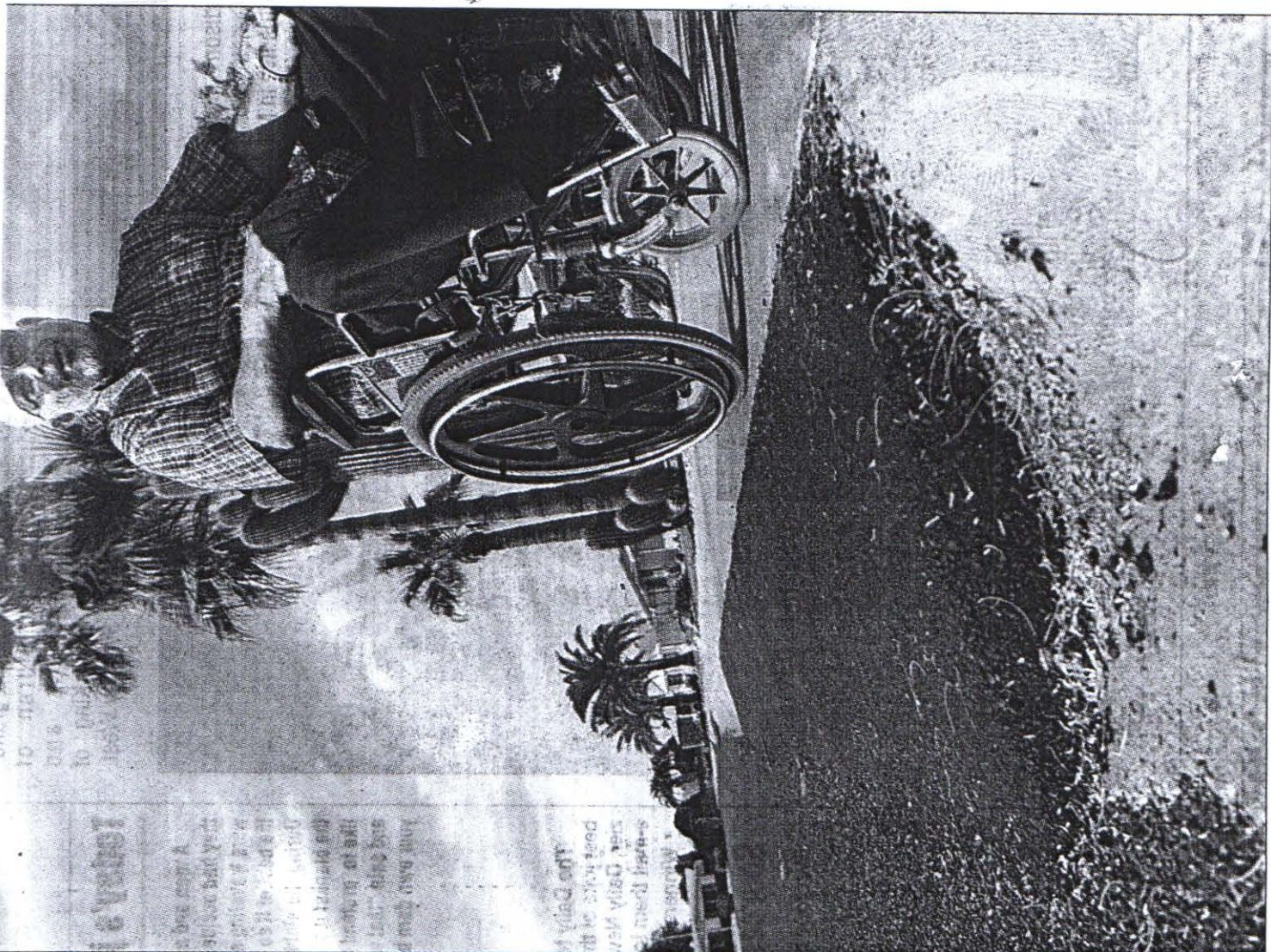
Bley said that when the county worked on Tarrytown a couple of years ago, workers removed previous curb materials and cuts. Bley, who had been used to the more gentle slope of his curb, forgot about the removal and headed down his driveway to cross the street.

"I was going to visit next door and forgot they had taken it out, and out I went and sprawled on the street," he said, adding he would have laid there in the street for a while "if it hadn't been for a couple guys who came by."

The county is giving the neighbors 30 days to remove the curbs. Neighbor Harry Engstrom said he's resigned to the probability he will have to remove his curb.

See **CURBS, A1**

OVER



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN
Jim Bley says the county wants him to remove the ramp he had installed in front of his home on Tarrytown Avenue in Sun City because such ramps can block water flow, leading to street erosion.

County nixes asphalt ramps

SUN CITY: Residents told drainage is hindered

KATY O'GRADY
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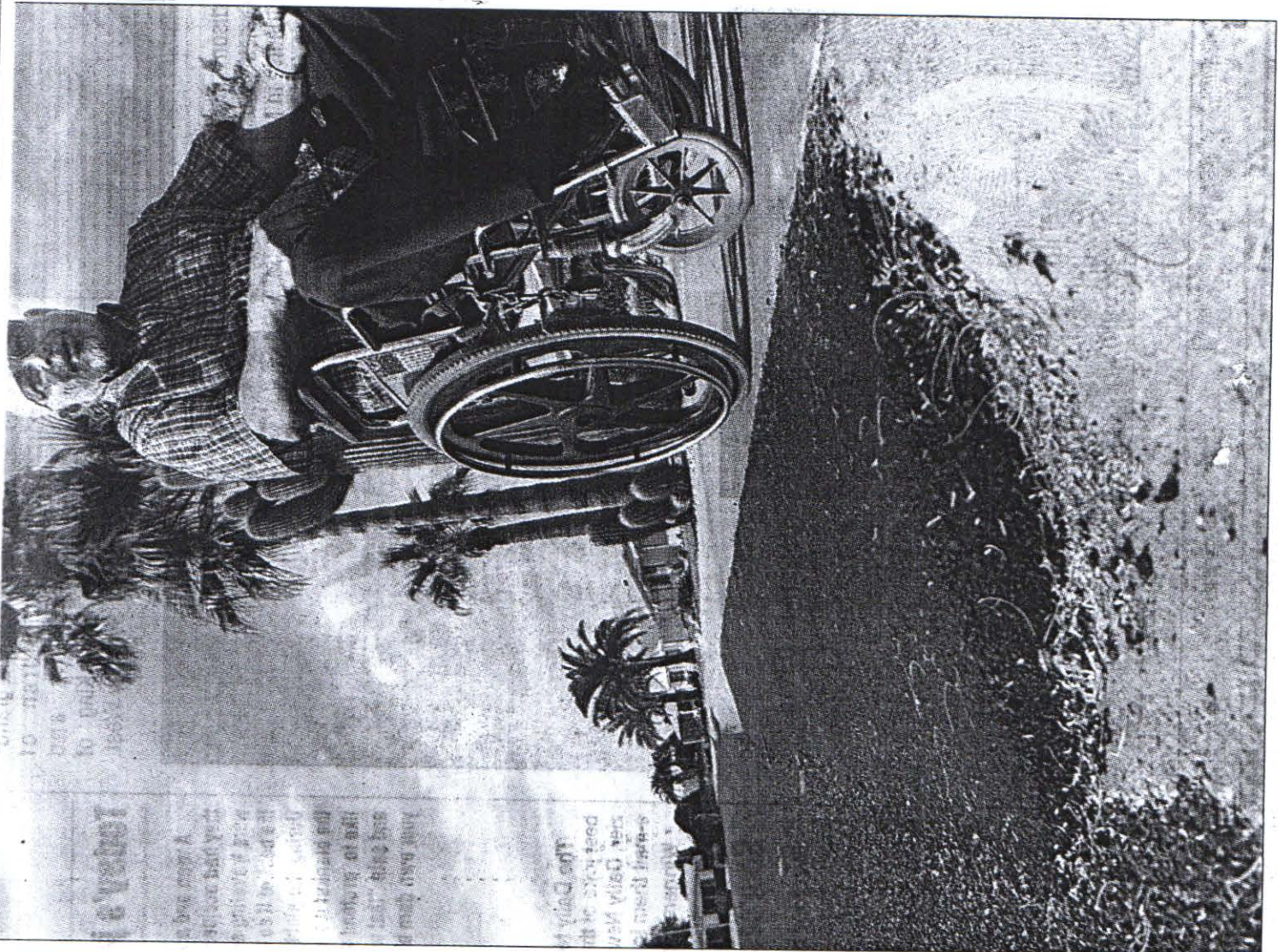
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OVER



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN
Jim Bley says the county wants him to remove the ramp he had installed in front of his home on Tarrytown Avenue in Sun City because such ramps can block water flow, leading to street erosion.

From A1

"We're not happy," he said. "But have you ever tried fighting city hall?"

Bley and neighbor Don Halsey say they won't comply without a fight. If the county wants them to remove their ramps, they say, then other Sun Citizens should also have to remove their ramp materials — which range from wooden planks and bricks to sheared cement and asphalt.

"I'm not going to remove it; I'm not physically able to," Bley said.

"I told them I'm not taking mine out," Halsey said. "I said I won't pay the bill. If they do that, I want a regular driveway put in."

Halsey said he's seen other streets in Sun City with regular driveways minus the curbs installed, but Urquiza said the county didn't pay for them.

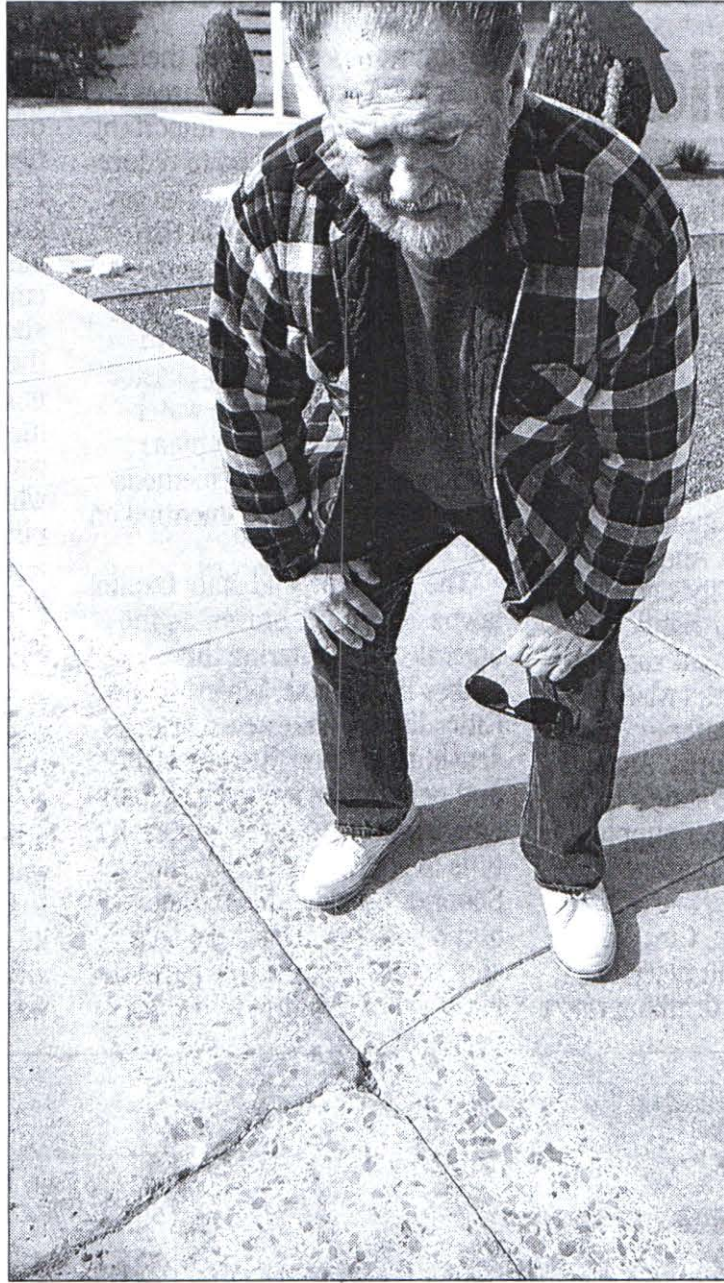
"We have never installed gradual-type (drives) because that is a homeowner's property," Urquiza said. "They were designed by Del Webb back in the early '60s."

Urquiza said Webb learned from its early driveways and designed more gentle-sloping driveways north of Grand Avenue later in its development.

Bley said he intends to start making a fuss about Americans with Disabilities Act violations in the area if he's not allowed to keep his curb.

"We have at least six people on scooters or wheelchairs," Bley said of his neighborhood. "I'm going to start some ADA things going because there's lots of things here in Sun City that don't comply."

Bley said without the asphalt ramps and due to a general lack of "curb cuts" allowing smooth street access



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Don Halsey says the county bladed this driveway in front of a home on Tarrytown Avenue in Sun City and now it's cracking.

in the neighborhood, he is forced to go several yards in either direction from his house and back again just to cross the street.

Pointing to the steep angle of the unaltered curb, Bley said, "If I came across a curb like that, it might as well be a

mile high for me."

Urquiza said he's not sure whether sloping driveways are required to meet ADA requirements. "I don't have an answer to that," he said.

Residents have options, though, Urquiza said. Those who want smoother driveway

access have two choices: Hire a contractor who gets a permit to cut the curb, which shaves down the concrete to make a more gradual ramp; or get a contractor and a permit to remove the driveway curb, allowing for a smoother transition between the street and driveway. The costs range from \$750-\$1,500 for the first option to more than \$2,500 for the second, he said.

Ione Boynton, executive secretary with the Sun City Home Owners Association, said the HOA recommends residents contact the association to find a contractor.

The HOA previously listed a curb cutter, but he dropped off the list, she said.

"There was a curb-cutting service that was acceptable and a lot of people were doing that after the county went in and started ripping things out," Boynton said. "If anyone's interested, they can contact us and we'll try to resurrect him."

HOA also recommends residents check with the Better Business Bureau and the Registrar of Contractors when choosing a contractor.

Halsey, however, said some of his neighbors have used the curb-cutting service, and now the cut cement is eroding due to the alteration. And anyway, he said, the neighbors approached the contractor, they weren't solicited, and they were more than pleased with his work.

"You tear the hell out of your vehicles, that's why we did it," he said. "If the other ones take theirs out, we'll take ours out. Fair is fair."

"I'm not upset at the contractor. The only thing I'm upset about is people hollering about something that's not shoddy."

Katy O'Grady can be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

February 12, 2003

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

County DOT orders removal of driveway ramps

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

When a group of Sun City residents had asphalt slabs constructed over their street gutters recently, they were just trying to pave the way to easier access to their driveways. Little did they realize they were headed down quite a rocky road.

A group of neighbors on Tarrytown Avenue in Phase I recently joined to hire a contractor to install driveway

ramps across the rolled street curbs, to improve appearances and access to the driveways.

However, Maricopa County Department of Transportation officials took exception.

"They are illegal because they block the flow of water, and you cannot do anything along the Maricopa County right of way without a permit," explained Frank Urquiza, MCDOT public works supervisor.

Mr. Urquiza said county inspectors canvassed the

neighborhood last week, notified residents of the problem with the ramps and informed them the ramps would have to be removed within 30 days at the homeowners' expense.

However, as of Feb. 6, Jim and Sylvia Bley and their neighbor Katherine Hunt, participants in the ramp project, said they had not heard from the county.

If homeowners do not remove the ramps, "the county will come and remove it and send them a bill," according to

Mr. Urquiza. "Fines would be at the discretion of the inspector."

Ione Boynton, executive director, of the Sun City Home Owners Association, said the organization did not file a complaint with the county, as some residents were led to believe.

"As far as I know we have not had any complaints about this situation," Mrs. Boynton said. She said she was told that the county just noticed the ramps while employees were working in the area.

The ramps were installed a few weeks ago by a contractor, who negotiated a single price to do all 10 driveways, though he billed each property owner individually.

The work cost each neighbor about \$124, according to Mr. Bley.

The Bleys and Ms. Hunt said they did not ask to see the contractor's license and they are unaware if the individual is licensed and bonded. They did

See Ramp — Page 5

OVER

Ramp

Continued From Page 1

not disclose the contractor's name.

The contractor has been told of the violation, according to Mr. Urquiza.

Alan Felber, licensing division manager for the Arizona Registrar of Contractors Office, said the work was done illegally because permits were not obtained.

"They (contractors) are required to pull any permits required or see that they are obtained by the property owner," Mr. Felber explained. "It behooves them to check on requirements.

"If he is licensed, we would hold him responsible," he continued.

Mr. Felber said there is precedent for the county granting permits after the fact. The county will generally assess a penalty for obtaining the permit after work is done, he noted.

"If that is all it takes, I don't mind obtaining a permit," Mr. Bley said.

"If all it needs is a permit, then we can get a variance," Ms. Hunt commented.

If a registered contractor did not do the work, that would make responsibility would be more difficult to assign, said Mr. Felber.

"Normally if someone needs a license and does not have one, we cannot order them to rectify the problem," Mr. Felber said, because the Registrar of Contractors has no jurisdiction over unlicensed contractors.

Mr. Felber explained that unlicensed handymen are allowed to do work on an individual job if the cost does not exceed \$750.

However, if the handyman did the same project for a

group of people, it may be considered "an aggregate job," and therefore "may be in violation," Mr. Felber cautioned.

If the ramps were installed by a handyman, the county ordinance requiring a permit would still be applicable, according to Mr. Felber. Therefore, the work was done illegally.

The Bleys said they and their neighbors did not set out to create a maelstrom when they had the ramps installed.

"The main reason we did it is because Jim cannot get out of our yard," said Mrs. Bley.

Mr. Bley has been confined to a wheelchair for the last 60 years, since having been stricken with polio.

"I think it looks good and it saves the front end of our car," Mr. Bley added.

He mentioned he had difficulty leaving his property because the rolled curb was difficult to negotiate with his wheelchair.

A ramp existed when the Bleys moved into their current residence about 12 years ago. It was removed when the county resurfaced the street two years ago, and that nearly cost Mr. Bley dearly.

"I was going to visit the next-door neighbor," he recalled. "I forget they had taken the ramp out and my wheelchair tipped over and I sprawled onto the street." He said he would have remained there helpless indefinitely if not for assistance provided by some passersby.

Ms. Hunt said the county was being discriminatory by singling out the neighborhood for enforcement. "There are probably a thousand of these things (ramps) in Sun City," she said.

"Ramps have always existed in Sun City," Mrs. Bley added.

"I challenge the county to remove all the driveway ramps in the unincorporated part of

the county," Ms. Hunt said.

Ms. Hunt, who said she has a disability but did not want to divulge it, contends the county is not complying with the Americans with Disability Act by not allowing the ramps.

"Even arthritis makes negotiation of the driveways difficult," she said.

"We did it to bring the street into compliance with the ADA,"

Ms. Hunt said. "The whole purpose of the ADA is to make properties accessible."

However, Mr. Ball, said it is not the county's responsibility to make each individual property handicapped accessible.

"We spent \$1.8 million to do upgrades at intersections a couple of years ago, to make them accessible," Mr. Ball said. Much of those improvements were done in Sun City and Sun City West, according to Mr. Ball.

Mr. Bley confirmed that the county did install curb cuts at intersections when Tarrytown was resurfaced two years ago.

"There are lots of problems around here that need attention, but they come around and pick on us," Mr. Bley complained. "This street has the greatest people.

"The county needs to ask, 'Why are people living on limited, fixed incomes paying their own money to alter the accessibility of their property?' " he remarked.

Mr. Bley is hopeful the situation can be resolved amicably and the county will allow the ramps to remain after permits are obtained.

"It would makes thing much easier for me," he said.



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers
Jim Bley a resident of Tarrytown Avenue gazes at his new driveway ramp, which he hoped the county will allow to remain.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2003

Resales in Sun Cities trail rest of Valley

KEY FACTORS:

No development, heirs want to sell quickly

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Statistics show home prices in the Sun Cities during the last few years have increased slightly, but lag behind the rest of the Valley.

Steve Meade of Ken Meade Realty said statistics reveal Sun City homes increased in selling price by 3.9 percent, from \$90,108 in 2000 to \$93,610 in 2001. In 2002, the average home selling price in Sun City rose 1 percent to \$94,527.

Sun City West home prices in 2002, Meade said, increased 0.6 percent, from \$137,182 to \$138,041.

In the rest of the Valley, home prices appreciated nearly 5 percent from the fourth quarter of 2001 to the same quarter in 2002.

Daily News-Sun classified advertisements provide another comparison on resales that can vary across



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Real-estate agent Diane Barnes with Ken Meade Realty says people are buying homes in the Sun Cities, but tend to favor the less expensive ones.

the communities:

In 1995 in Sun City West, a Safford home on Sentinel Drive was listed for \$149,500; eight years later, similar homes in the same

neighborhood are being sold for more than \$160,000, or a 7 percent increase.

Sun City home values

From A1

appreciated as well: In 1995, a home near 103rd Avenue and Hutton Drive was listed at \$96,500, while a comparable home in the same neighborhood this year is going for \$115,000, a 19 percent increase.

Recent history, though, tells a different story, and local Realtors say there are many explanations.

Meade said home prices remain pretty stable in the Sun Cities because the communities are built out. The tendency in other parts of the Valley, he said, focuses on building and buying larger homes. He added that newer homes sold in close proximity to older homes result in

homes) go up in value, they go up very little."

Stevenson said when retirees move to the Sun Cities, they often look for homes in which they plan to live out their lives, and therefore have little interest in upgrading them for resale. She said some homes in Sun City are more than 40 years old, and the amenities are outdated. Buyers, she said, take that fact into consideration when looking at homes.

Buyers, she said, consider either gutting a home they purchase or updating the features, both of which drive prices down.

Meade said he agrees with Stevenson — to a degree. He said he tries to convince heirs to invest in homes they

prices going up for all houses in the immediate area.

"If you go into different (communities), you see newer homes — and you are not going to see that in Sun City and Sun City West," Meade said.

Lenore Stevenson of REMAX Realty said there two reasons home prices are not increasing as rapidly in the Sun Cities as the rest of the Valley. She said when a Sun Citian dies, heirs often try to cash out as quickly as possible, and list inherited homes well below market values.

"Heirs are trying to get out of the property (quickly)," she said, adding that her parents have lived in Sun City West for six years and see this occurring frequently. "If (the

inherit — if needed — before putting the property on the market. Some, he conceded, refuse to do so, and the heirs are the ones who ultimately lose out, since lack of repairs and updates bring down home values.

Meade said most people who purchase homes in the Sun Cities undertake remodeling their properties within the first few years of acquiring a home. After making the home to their liking, future upgrades are rare, he said.

Michael Maresh can be reached at 876-2513 or mmaresh@aztrib.com.

See RESALES, A5

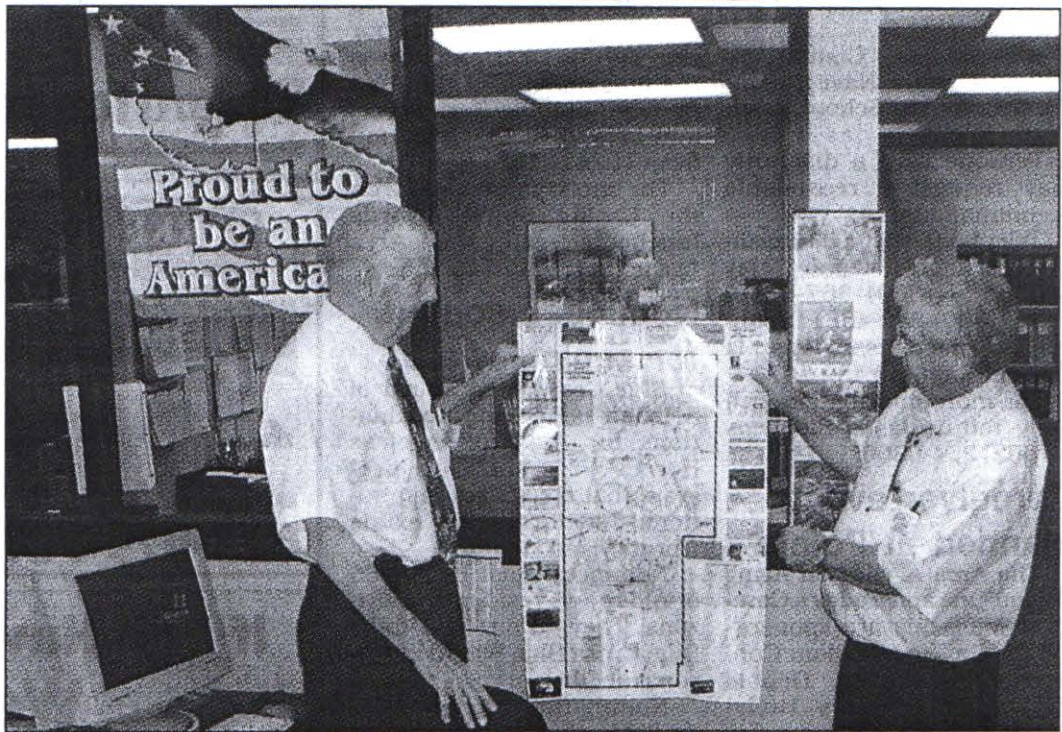


Photo by Chris Seggerman/Independent Newspapers

Tom Keys and Del Jenson, real estate agents at the Greenway office of Ken Meade Realty, survey a map detailing possible opportunities.

SENIOR DIGS

Sun Cities' home prices remain strong

By Charlene Patti Bisson
Independent Newspapers

The price of resale homes in Sun City in the quarter ended June 30 was up 7 percent compared with sales prices in the second quarter of last year, according to an analysis of Multiple Listing Service data by RE/MAX International.

The Sun City zip code 85351 accounted for 443 resales in the quarter at an average price of \$93,596.

That price was up from the 2002 second quarter average price of \$87,556, when that zip code was ranked No. 1 in the Valley in resale volume, with 453 homes sold.

In the first quarter of 2003, 431 homes were sold in that zip code at an average cost of \$97,136, also ranking it No. 1 in resale volume.

"It is quite accurate," said RE/MAX International Public Relations Manager Jack Farrar. "In fact, we don't get the data until 30 days following the end of the quarter to eliminate duplicates."

Real Data Strategies, a California-based company, rearranged the MLS data, ranking it by zip codes. Realtors use the MLS to list

houses and land for sale.

"The break down is just resale homes sold by Realtors," Mr. Farrar said. Houses sold by homeowners are not included on the list.

"The last six months we have seen an increase in prices," commented Ken Meade Realtor Del Jenson. "We have seen the number of houses for sale go down dramatically, which causes prices to go up."

"We are getting a lot of empty nesters moving out here who are still working over 55."

Sun City West home resales in zip code 85375 totalled 381, with an average sales price of \$147,329 in the second quarter, compared with 340 homes at an average price of \$140,128 in the year-ago quarter.

In the first quarter of 2003, 335 homes were sold in that zip code at an average cost of \$148,934.

"Sun City West has really distinctive areas," said Mr. Jenson, noting it was built in several phases.

Mr. Jenson added buyers seeks the Sun Cities because it is affordable with lots of amenities.

"Sales tax is lower, seems like a reasonable place to

live," he said.

Homes in the Town of Paradise Valley are the most expensive in the Valley.

In the 85253 zip code, 146 homes were resold with an average sales price of \$906,953 in the second quarter of 2003.

Town of Paradise Valley was also the most expensive community in the first quarter of 2003. Mr. Farrar said 98 listings were sold in the first quarter in that zip code, and the average price was \$1.06 million.

The second highest average price in the second quarter was at Scottsdale's 85262 zip code, with an average cost of \$610,978.

Realty Executives' Mark Moskowitz, who has been the top agent for five years in Paradise Valley, said the bedroom community gives people the feeling of living on an estate.

"There is no commercial zoning in the town limits," Mr. Moskowitz said. "The town founders said there will be no lots less than 1 acre."

The town features characteristics of a rural community, such as few lights and no

See Homes — Page 10

OVER

Homes

Continued From Page 1
sidewalks.

Currently 164 homes are available in the community, down from close to 400 in the 1990s.

"We had an amazing eight- or nine-year run from the early 90s to early 2000s," Mr. Moskowitz said. "We've had our ups and downs."

He said 3.5 to 5 acres sells for \$700,000 to \$800,000, but following Sept. 11, 2001, they went for \$500,000 for a couple of years.

The most appealing elements to sell a home are floor plan and surfaces. Mr. Moskowitz said a lime stone floor will sell quicker than linoleum.

Most buyers prefer not seeing the kitchen and master bedroom from the entry. He said the living room is often added to that list.

"Some of these properties that have been sitting on the market a long time is because

Homes Sold

Cities Leading in Resales Second Quarter 2003

City	Zip	Units Sold	Ave. Price
Arrowhead	85308	450	\$193,125
Chandler	85225	444	\$149,547
Sun City	85351	443	\$93,596
Scottsdale	85255	441	\$508,195
Surprise	85374	418	\$151,995

Information supplied by RE/MAX International.

property is priced too high," Mr. Moskowitz said.

Town of Paradise Valley features the most-expensive homes, but the Arrowhead Ranch area is on highest demand.

Arrowhead homes lead the Valley in resale volume in the 2003 second quarter.

Realtors sold 452 Arrowhead Ranch homes in the 85308 zip code — two more than this time last year. The average sales price was

\$193,125.

In the first quarter of 2003, the 85308 zip code accounted for 347 home sales with an average price of \$175,910.

Ranch Realtor Linda Rehwalt explained why the Arrowhead area is so highly sought by customers.

"The Arrowhead area used to be just Arrowhead Ranch," Ms. Rehwalt said. "As growth has expanded Arrowhead, in my mind, (it has become) a

master-planned community. People think of Arrowhead as bigger than it is. It has become the northwest Valley."

Arrowhead is affordable compared to other areas in the Valley, and buyers receive a lot of amenities, she added.

"It is a newer area and there is continued growth," Ms. Rehwalt said. "When people come in they see a sense of prosperity and growth and I think that give you (the buyer) confidence."

Surprise also is moving on up in the resale industry.

Homeowners in the 85374 zip code sold 418 homes, coming in fifth in total homes sold in the Valley. The average price was \$151,995.

In the first quarter of 2003, it was No. 9, with 298 at an average selling price of \$143,007.

Beverly Drago, with RE/MAX Achievers, who sold more than 40 homes in the 85374 zip code in the past 12 months, said Surprise has changed drastically since 1997.

"There are about 60,000 people in Surprise now, and in 14 years they're projecting the population will be about 250,000."

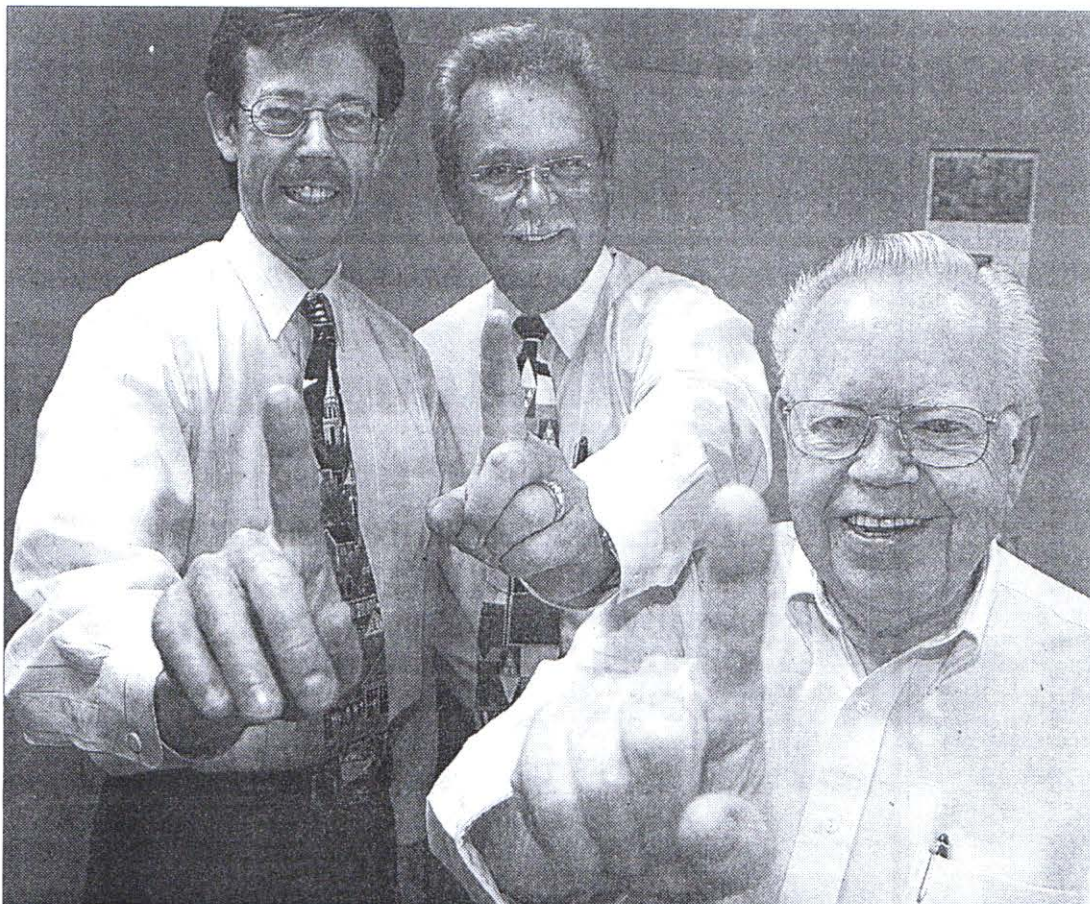
She said initially the vast majority of buyers were retirees, but with development explosion, more young

families are making Surprise home.

"The new library, the spring training facilities and the (aquatic center) have all contributed to the growth," she said. "I don't see any signs that activity will let up anytime soon."

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22, 2003

DAILY NEWS-SUN



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Steve Meade, left, president of Ken Meade Realty, Norm Brenna, general sales manager, center, and Ken Meade, realty founder and owner, affirm their position as sales leaders in the Sun Cities area.

Ken Meade Realty marks 20 years selling Sun City

MITCHELL VANTREASE
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Ken Meade Realty started modestly with one office.

Two decades and six offices later, its No. 1 in market sales for the Sun Cities area. The family-owned business will celebrate its 20th anniversary this week.

"I never expected for it to be this large," said owner and founder Ken Meade.

Ken Meade Realty has more than 300 agents on staff and sales locations in Sun City West, Sun City and Glendale. Plus, there is a rental and condominium office.

"All I hoped was that I could run a very commendable and successful business," he said.

Meade worked as a broker at Mull Realty in 1983 before striking out on his own. The then 57-year-old had such a good work ethic that 15 people quit their jobs and followed him to his business.

"A few of them are still here right now," he said. "It's been amazing."

The first office debuted in the LaRonde Shopping Centre in Sun City to steady sales. Now, Meade's company has a strong presence with several locations.

"My father laid an excellent foundation on where we're trying to go with the business," said Steve Meade, his son and president.

The two remember selling only a few houses in the first month that the realty office opened. Last year, the sales volume exceeded \$425 million with 3,772 transactions.

Steve Meade said he attributes their success to excellent customer service and caring for the surrounding community. The family's philanthropy extends to a wide range of charitable causes and includes support of the community institutions such as the Sundome and the Sun City Visitors Center.

"You have to give back because it's not always about taking," said Ken Meade.

Norm Brenna, general sales manager, has worked with the Meades for 12 years. He believes the work ethic of the company helps them remain a pillar in the area.

"It's such a respected place," Brenna said. "Every time we're mentioned from people, it's been nothing but good things."

Recently, Ken Meade decided to retire and let Steve take over the daily operations. The retiree cares for his wife, Alice, who suffered from a stroke.

However, he looks forward to the future and expanding.

"We own ground in Surprise and maybe we'll build on it one day," he said.

Mitchell Vantrease can be reached at 876-2526 or mvantrease@aztrib.com.

IF YOU GO

■ **WHAT:** Ken Meade 20th-anniversary open houses featuring food, fun, drawing for prizes.

■ **WHEN:** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday.

■ **WHERE:** Sun City: 17001 N. Del Webb Blvd. and 15210 N. 99th Ave.

Sun City West: 13802 W. Meeker Blvd. and 19232 R.H. Johnson Blvd.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

MONDAY, JAN. 26, 2004

4 years and counting

Bell Road lot remains unfinished, unoccupied

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Glass bottles, weeds and litter surround a rotting structure that plagues nearby businesses and neighbors and, despite their efforts, there is still no solution.

The unfinished, vacant building behind the Sun City Filiberto's Mexican restaurant at 9510 W. Bell Road remains unchanged after years of deterioration. The property is owned by Sanford

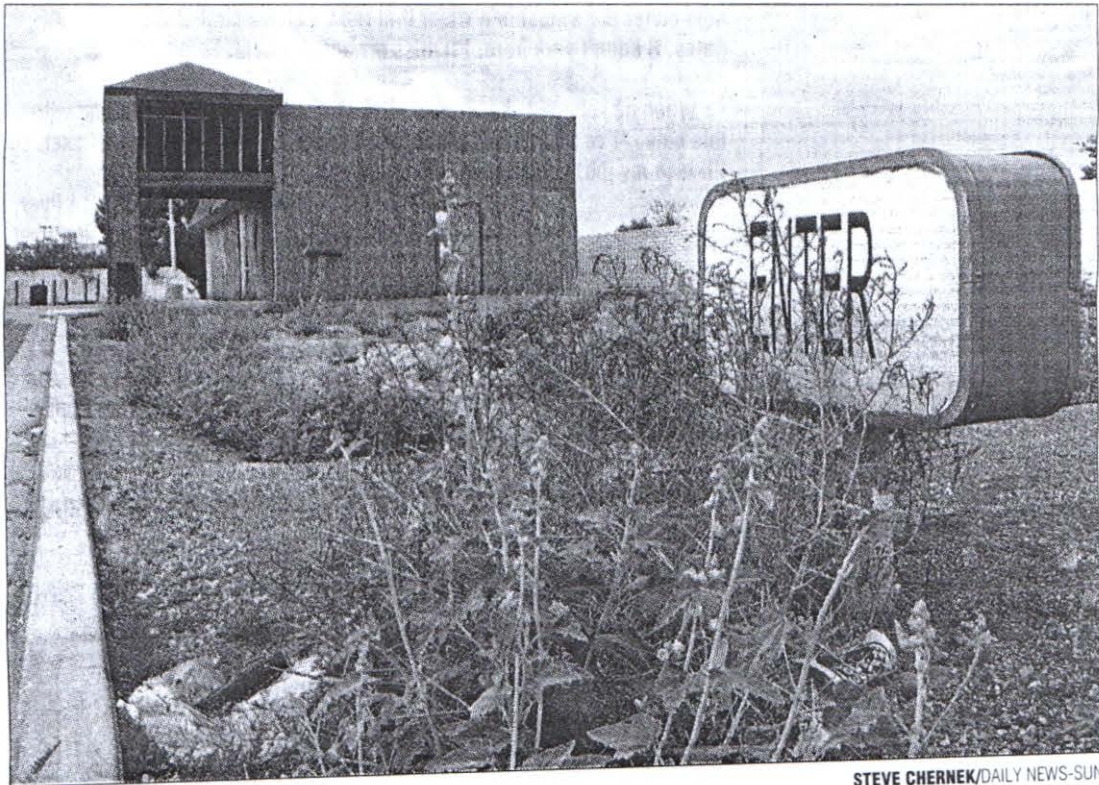
See PROPERTY, A5



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Insulation is strewn around the floor inside the abandoned building.

OVER



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Trash and weeds accumulate around an abandoned building behind a restaurant at Bell Road and Lindgren Avenue in Sun City.

From A1

Burstyn, a private investor who took over the property in June of 2000.

Four years ago, Burstyn said he was waiting to finish construction before he would begin to look for tenants. However, the construction was never finished and he now plans to relinquish the responsibility of tearing down or repairing the structure to the new tenants. Until he finds them, Burstyn has no plans for the lot.

"As far as I know, the property is in compliance," he said. "I was told I needed to fill a couple of holes or trenches, and I've got someone going out there to take care of that."

Burstyn also owns the land where Filiberto's sits. The restaurant is currently in bankruptcy, and he doesn't know if or when it will close, leaving another vacant building in need of new tenants.

Scott Isham, spokesman for Maricopa County

Supervisor Max Wilson, said the county is aware of the community's disapproval of the vacant property, but there is little they can do.

"It's in an unfinished state," Isham said. "We're pretty much powerless to make him do anything."

Although the building permit lapsed, the county can't force Burstyn to finish the project or to sell the property, Isham said, adding that the county can enforce maintenance of the weeds and graffiti.

Burstyn said is actively seeking tenants, and he'd be willing to give a great deal to a well-known corporation like Starbucks or to a bank. He's rejected any offers he's received thus far.

Dick Sheets, owner of Carpet Corner, a business across the street from the property, offered to buy the land when Burstyn began accepting offers from prospective buyers.

"When I offered him \$350,000, he laughed at me," Sheets said, adding that he is

still pursuing the possibility of owning the land should the price tag go down.

Sheets had hoped to tear down the rotten wood frame of the unfinished building and replace it with an aesthetic-looking warehouse to serve as an extension of Carpet Corner. He is also interested in expanding even more into what is now Filiberto's when that lease is up. Regardless of Sheets' plans to rebuild or beautify the lot, his hands are tied because Burstyn hasn't budged on his asking price.

"Someone needs to put some pressure on that guy to do something," he said. "Maybe then, he'd be more inclined to sell."

Sheets has been working with Jan Leighton, a Realtor with J.D. Campbell Real Estate in Peoria, who agreed that the price tag on the property is unreasonable.

"We've had several discussions with the gentleman (Burstyn), and he is just not willing to sell it for the price Mr. Sheets was willing to

pay," Leighton said. "He thinks it's worth more than it is. It would be another thing if the building were completed."

In September, Stanley Frederick moved into his home that shares a wall with the lot. The decaying property, he said, almost swayed his decision of whether or not to buy the house. He did, but promptly bought three trees to line the rear of his backyard in an attempt to block the unsightly view.

"It probably makes the property value go down," Frederick said. "And nobody's going to do anything about it."

Frederick said he called the Sun City Home Owner's Association, who told him to call Peoria officials, who told him to call the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. However, he became weary of the chain because he never saw any results of his concern.

Annie Karstens can be reached at 876-2532 or akarstens@aztrib.com

Sun City HOA licks tax with dog park fund

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dog lovers and neighbors of the La Ronde dog park have nurtured and enjoyed the patch of property for years.

Some residents have contributed funds in the interest of maintaining the park, and now, the Sun City Home Owners Association Foundation has established a tax-exempt fund to accept and process funds to support the maintenance of the park area, southwest of the corner of Thunderbird and Del Webb boulevards.

Gerry Unger, president of the HOA foundation, said the tax exemption was discussed after a possible donor was tentatively set to contribute a significant amount of money for the park's sprinkler system. The HOA has been paying the water bill for four years, with the help of local contributors, and appreciates the efforts of park goers.

"The money is used for the purpose of keeping it beautiful and not neglected," Unger said, adding the Sun City PRIDES and dog



Bill and Lena Tatum and Buddy, their Lhasa apso, take a walk Tuesday in the La Ronde dog park near Del Webb and Thunderbird boulevards in Sun City.

STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

OVER

owners also contribute their time by picking up litter and caring for the area.

Any funds donated to the park would be used exclusively for the maintenance of the grounds and its water system, not for any of its three other projects — the Median Fund, The Wall Fund and the Blinkin' Bulbs project.

Jim Corcoran, HOA president, said the benefits of the tax exemption are twofold: the park gets proper maintenance and those who pay to maintain it get a bit of a tax write-off.

Buddy, a Lhasa apso, brings his owners, Bill and Lena Tatum, to the La Ronde park twice a day.

"He tells us when to come and when to go," Lena said. "He won't eat or

drink until he comes to the park to see his friends."

The Tatums, who have frequented the park since 1989, have been regular contributors to maintenance funds.

"We've been taking money to the HOA for a long time to help with the water bill," Lena said. She and her fellow dog owners realize the importance of their donations. She said a tax exemption is a good idea, but would have given regardless.

La Ronde park is actually a private property owned by two women who live in Texas and have been trying to sell the park for years, Corcoran said. The HOA has classified the women as "absentee

owners" and decided that instead of letting the property become run down and an eyesore, they would step in.

"All we're doing is maintaining it so that it looks decent for the community," Corcoran said, stressing that no improvements to the park will be made, only maintenance. "Donated funds will be used to assist with the basic upkeep of the park. We're staying away from improvements because it is private property," he said.

Charles Chadbourn, a contributor and dog owner, is proud of the way Sun Citians have rallied around the park and shown their support. He has been working alongside Unger to set

up a fund dedicated to the park.

"A whole lot of Sun City people helping each other to keep something nice in our community," Chadbourn said. "It makes your heart sing to know that all these residents would come together to do a lot of small things that add up to something big."

He said La Ronde park has become a treasured meeting place — a hub for dog lovers and those who enjoy the outdoors.

"For some, it's become their primary social time of the day," he said. "It's the sort of place you'd expect to see in a city like ours."

Noel Kasper shares a wall with the dog park and waters two large pine trees

in the park directly behind him. He says the existing water source doesn't make it to the trees, so he waters them from his property and fits the water bill.

"I contribute the water, that's my donation," Kasper said. "It's in my interest to care about the park and the people that use it."

Kasper inherited his home and learned the previous owners paid extra for the house, to the tune of about \$8,000, simply because of the park.

For information about donating to the park fund or the tax exemption, call Paul White at 972-5330.

Annie Karstens can be reached at 876-2532 or akarstens@aztrib.com

Adobe wall violates CC&Rs in Sun City

Owner willing to oblige HOA

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Donald Dolan's home is hard to miss. While passing through the neighborhood just west of 99th and Peoria avenues or playing the 18th hole of South Golf Course, you're likely to spot his Spanish-style hacienda that's nearing completion.

With angles that resemble those of the Alamo, the structure is the only one of its kind on the street. Onlookers have likened it to a cross between a Taco Bell and a Mexican Catholic Church, but for Dolan, it's home.

"I just decided this is the style I want," said Dolan, who is leading the construction project. "We're in the Southwest — it fits into the motif here."

Dolan's home on West Peoria Avenue was built in 1961. He and his partner,



Nell Peel is Don Dolan's neighbor, and says she loves what he's done to remodel his home, built in 1961 in Phase I of Sun City.

Jim Angeney, basically gutted the home and gave it a complete remodeling, which was an expensive undertaking, Dolan said. Now the modernized home has been known to stop traffic.

"You can actually watch the cars stop and stare at it," he said. "We've had people drive by and yell, 'We'll

have two tacos!'"

To Dolan's dismay, his house was brought to the attention of the Sun City Home Owners Association board of directors by an individual who complained that it may be in violation of Sun City's governing documents, the covenant, conditions and restrictions.

Upon investigation, the HOA board found that one aspect of the property did violate the CC&Rs.

Jim Corcoran, HOA president, confirmed that a solid wall that sits on the edge of a golf course is too high.

Dolan has been seeking a variance in order to allow his back wall to remain intact, however, the HOA may have to enforce the codes — no matter how aesthetic the wall may be.

The CC&Rs state that walls within 25 feet of the edge of a green are not to be higher than three feet if made of stone or a similar dense material, Corcoran said.

Dolan's wall rises over the three-foot regulation, and the issue will go to the board at its meeting March 9.

"We certainly don't want him to have to tear it down, but he may have to bring it down or taper it a bit to fit into regulation height," Corcoran said, adding that

several board members love what Dolan has done to his property. "It would be wonderful to leave it, but if the vote was to leave it as is, then the next party who's argument is, 'If he broke the rules, so can I,' would be right."

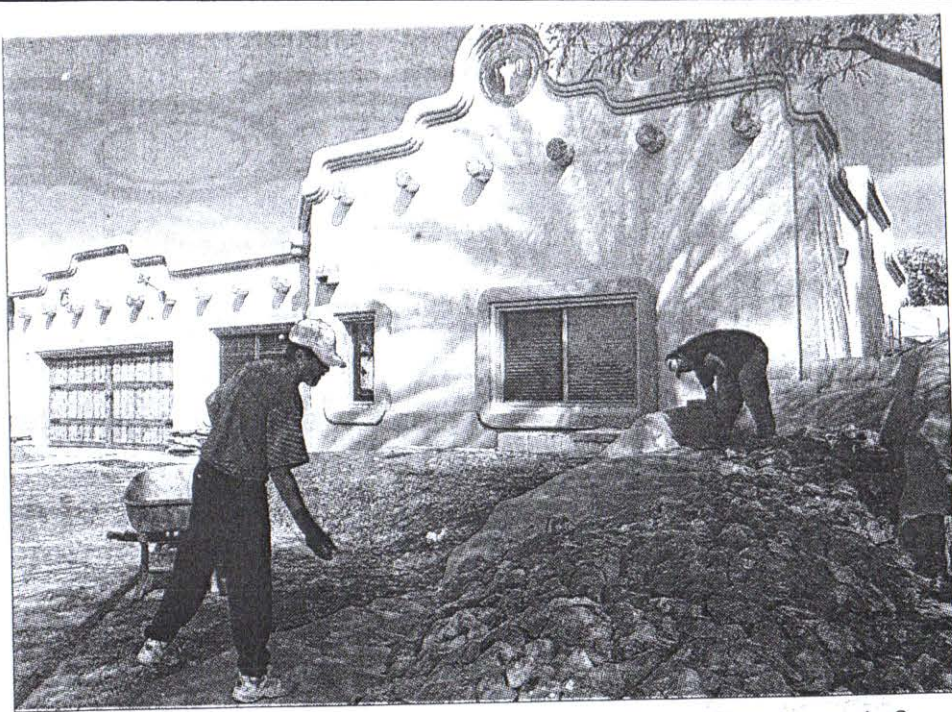
Dolan maintains that he was totally ignorant of those rules when he began building and is ready to amend his structure as needed.

"Well, I did it, and now it's up to the HOA whether it gets torn down or not," Dolan said. "I didn't put it up purposely to thumb my nose at the HOA. If they ask me to tear it down, I'll tear it down. I'll do whatever they ask."

Corcoran and Bob Arthur, HOA director and chairman of the land-use committee, understand that Dolan was unaware of the codes and agree that he has been more than cooperative. Arthur thinks the property may be worth a

See CC&Rs, A5

OVER



Workers install landscaping at Don Dolan's house on West Peoria Avenue in Sun City.

From A1

compromise.

"It's unique and absolutely adds to the neighborhood," Arthur said. "It's just beautiful."

DeVon Guthery, HOA director, disagrees.

"Well, beauty is in the eye of the beholder," Guthery said. "I think it's very out of place in the neighborhood. I think his money would be better spent in another place — like somewhere in the desert."

"You can't tell people they can't build onto a home or dictate this design or that design," Corcoran said. "As long as they stay within the CC&Rs and follow through with the permits they need from the county, they're OK."

Times in Sun City are changing, and property should as well, Dolan said.

"This is not the same Sun City people moved into in 1961," he said. "You've got the modern grandma here now and they want the modern look."

Nell Peel lives next door to Dolan, and as an artist who's studied Spanish-inspired architecture, she said his home is right on.

"I think it's great for the neighborhood — it kind of spices us up out here," Peel said, noting that it would be devastating if any changes were made to the structure. "It's terribly authentic. They've done a great job."

In an effort to gather more opinions about his home, Dolan set up a table



PHOTOS BY STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

After remodeling his house in Phase I, Don Dolan, right, and contractor Jim Anegney learned the wall violates the community's CC&Rs.

on his back patio facing the green and asked passersby to fill out a survey asking whether or not they liked the home.

It read in part: "On a scale of one to ten, one being negative and ten being very positive, please let me know how you feel about the aesthetics of this structure facing the golf course."

About 25 people responded, and of those, about four responses were negative.

"We have gotten so much positive feedback," Dolan said, noting that the survey wasn't a petition, just a way to gauge his neighbors' thoughts.

Frank Miller of Sun City, a golfer at South, thinks the wall is fine and that the

home adds value to the area.

"I think it's beautiful," Miller said.

"He's upgrading for the other neighbors; he's increased everybody's property value."

Sun City resident Wayne Steincamp agreed with his golf buddy.

"I think it's absolutely gorgeous," Steincamp said. "It's really a great place."

"I think it's nice, but he put way too much money into it," added Nick Panella of Sun City, a fellow golfer.

DAILY NEWS-SUN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2004

HOA scrutinizes patio-homes' plan

Density, traffic issues key concerns

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Major concerns surrounding the housing development proposed for the vacant lot next to Sunland Memorial Park Mortuary and Cremation Center engaged the Sun City Home Owners Association board of directors Tuesday.

Members voted unanimously Tuesday to oppose the building plans, citing issues of density, safety and

accessibility.

The HOA board is responding to the 266 single-level patio homes proposed for the 27-acre lot, which translates to about 10 homes per acre, a density that alarms the HOA board. Members' concerns with safety and accessibility stem from Sunland Drive being the only access route into the proposed development. The HOA fears that Sunland Drive, a two-lane road maintained by the county and Sunland

Mortuary, will not adequately accommodate the hundreds of vehicles that would traverse the road on a daily basis, having to cut through the mortuary grounds to access the subdivision.

The HOA board is worried that fire trucks and other emergency vehicles would have difficulty gaining entrance to the development, and emphasized it is not opposed to growth, but want to protect Sun City at all costs.

"We're not opposed to homes built in there at all, but we are concerned about having them built as the developers have proposed," said Jim Corcoran, HOA president, referring to the density of the building plans and the roads.

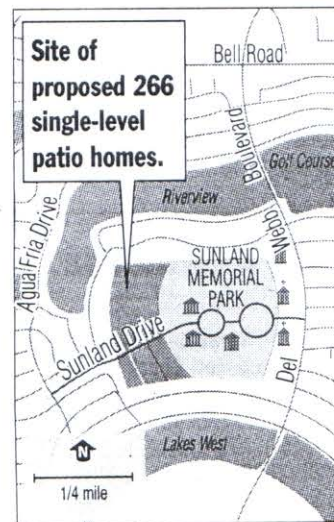
"The realization of it is, there will be some homes there. You can't stop the homes, but we aren't going to agree to 266 homes there by any stretch of the imagination."

Corcoran and other HOA board members found that on a sample neighborhood

existing in Sun City, about 187 homes were situated in a 27-acre area and were connected by one major street and five access roads, Corcoran said.

The HOA has contacted an engineer asking him to volunteer his time to help them more accurately research special factors of the development. Additionally, the HOA is drafting a letter to county officials, the developers and local boards, stating their concerns, as well as forming a committee to deal directly

See HOMES, A5



DAILY NEWS-SUN

OVER

with the development issues.

The vacant property that is being sold by Texas-based Service Corporation International, is under contract for a pending sale with the developers — Arizona International Investments company of Phoenix, according to SCI representative Terry Hemeyer.

Rommel Fitz, owner of Arizona International Investments, is working in conjunction with its engineers, CBJ developers. Fitz said he hears the concerns of the HOA and the community and that he can offer some answers to their questions about the subdivision, tentatively named "Sun City Manor."

"I don't think it's really a density issue — there are apartments and townhouses all over the Valley and in Sun City they aren't a density concern, they blend in," Fitz said. "Our development will blend in quite nicely."

The 266 patio homes are probably being imagined as large, traditional single-family houses, which they aren't, Fitz said. The homes may range from 1,300 to 1,800 square feet with an option of a two-car garage or a two-car and two-golf car garage.

"These are patio homes, a compromise between a house and townhouse," he said. "They're not the homes people think they are."

A Technical Advisory Committee meeting is planned for March 16 when the

IF YOU GO

■ **WHAT:** Technical Advisory Meeting for Arizona International Investments Development in Sun City. Open to the public.

■ **WHEN:** 2:15 p.m., Tuesday, March 16.

■ **WHERE:** 411 N. Central Ave. in Phoenix.

developers will meet with Maricopa County Planning and Zoning, environmental services, department of transportation, local boards and other the public works officials to look at the situation and what kind of impact it would have, said Scott Isham, spokesman for County Supervisor Max Wilson. The meeting is open to the public. Isham agrees with the HOA that 266 is a large number of homes.

"Supervisor Wilson always says you have to work with the surrounding community and fit into the neighborhood," Isham said, adding that the developers will have to take local concerns into consideration. "Planning and zoning said at first glance there are a lot of technical problems with access ... this meeting is when they really get down to talking about the nitty gritty of it."

The formal application submitted by the developers asks for a residential zoning from the current zoning that states that residential homes must be built on no less than 1 acre of land, or 43,560 square feet. Isham said the rezoning application

is pretty extensive, but stressed that public opinions are heavily considered amid zoning decisions.

In addition to the rezoning approval process, the developers are required to maintain regular meetings with local boards and will also be involved in a public participation program that enforces communication with the community and are required by law to send an informative document to neighbors within 300 feet of the development before any building can start, Isham said.

Fitz expects a backlash from some residents, however, he believes that the new homes will be a welcomed addition to Sun City, which hasn't had any major housing developments in 20 years.

"The fact is more and more people are moving into Sun City, and unless they want to move into Sun City Grand or Sun City West, they're having to buy older homes," Fitz said, adding that bringing in a bigger population means an influx of money for local business and the Recreation Centers. "You can only be stagnant so long before things start to decay."

After meeting with the HOA on several occasions, Fitz believes they've reached some viable compromise.

"They weren't negative and they told us what they wanted," Fitz said, adding that he has compromised by not designing two-story homes, by minimizing the use of grass and not including gates in their design. "I take the

HOA very seriously. If you keep your neighbors happy, it's always smoother."

The Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors is remaining neutral on the issues surrounding the development, said Jim Kuchler, RCSC president. He said members of the RCSC board probably wouldn't be present at the TAC meeting.

"We're negotiating with the developers for the new homeowners to become part of the recreation centers when they move in," Kuchler said. "As far as the number of homes, we have no position on that. We would welcome new residents and be glad to have them on board."

Chuck Ullman, president of the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association, said similar situations have occurred in Sun City West in recent years. About five years ago, Continental Home Builders sought to build 2,700 new homes near the orchards just east of Sun City West, where Corta Bella is located. Ullman said the HOA and concerned residents can make a difference.

"The community thought that it (the Continental proposal) was way out of line and did not meet anywhere near the density that was established in Sun City West," Ullman said, adding that residents there formed a coalition against the development.

"Before the county agreed to hear us, Continental Homes pulled out. They saw there was too much opposition."

West Valley resales break records

Prices climb in Sun Cities

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

For Ken Meade Realty in Sun City, last year was the best year for selling homes — until this year's sales broke all their records. Norm Brenna, general sales manager with Ken Meade, said homes in the Sun Cities are being snatched up more quickly in

2004 and selling at higher prices.

"Home sales are absolutely fantastic this year. It's just phenomenal right now," Brenna said.

The Sun Cities are part of a Valleywide wave of increased home sales. The Valley's resale market surged to a monthly record of 8,780 sales in March, surpassing the previous record of 8,185 sales in September 2003, according to the Arizona Real Estate Center.

Last month's resales in the Valley far surpassed the 5,580 resales recorded in February and is well ahead of the 6,725 resales in March 2003.

A total of 19,460 resales were recorded in the first quarter, up from 15,030 for the first quarter of 2003 and 12,655 for the first quarter of 2002.

The Sun City resale market increased from 400 in 2003 to 495 sales in 2004, with the median sales price

rising from \$108,900 to \$127,000. Resale activity in Sun City West declined from 310 to 250 recorded sales, but the median sales price rose from \$151,000 to \$155,000. El Mirage resales improved from 100 sales to 215, and the median price increased from \$111,700 to \$123,900. Surprise increased from 350 to 640 home sales, with the median price rising from \$135,950 to \$150,000. Glendale home sales

improved from 1,290 to 1,460, and the median sale price rose from \$136,200 to \$146,000.

Some contributing factors include low interest rates and the constant influx of people moving to the Valley, Brenna said.

"The biggest thing with Sun City and Sun City West is that they're such proven communities," Brenna said. "The value of the homes in the Sun Cities continue to rise because they are built

very well. Del Webb did a very good job and it helps with resale."

Brenna knows that the real estate market can be fickle, rising and falling as the economy changes over the years. For now, it's a seller's market and the price for a home will continue to rise for the time being, Brenna said.

"It's really hard to say if this will last. Coming into an

See REALES, A5

From A1

election year, you never know what's going to happen," he said. "However, there seems to be no stopping it for now."

The West Valley as a whole is growing at an accelerated rate. Communities such as Vistancia in Peoria, Sun City Grand in Surprise and Corta Bella in a county isle adjacent to Sun City West are defining the West Valley as a premier area to invest in a new home, Brenna said.

Jay Butler, director of the Arizona Real Estate Center, agreed that the West Valley market is an ideal place. Retirement communities,

such as the Sun Cities, are benefitting from long-standing positive reputations and the amenities offered in the neighborhoods.

"Retirement communities are part of a different market, there are different needs and expectations," Butler said, adding that top-notch health-care facilities, hospitals, recreation centers and well-built homes are all reasons retirees head for the Sun Cities.

Butler said that retirement communities aren't being left behind in the booming real estate market.

"The market seems to be going along well," Butler said.

"There are the typical reasons, such as investment and the desire to own, etc., although investment probably seems to be the motivation right now. It seems to be a market that is relatively well-balanced. People are willing to pay the prices. They're not going to argue that much because interest rates are so low. They want to get into the property quickly."

Although demand for homes seems unstoppable, there are concerns that a still-struggling job market could affect the future income of owners and buyers alike, he said.

"One of the forces driving

the market right now is, with the ever-higher gasoline prices, energy costs will drive up inflation and inflation drives up interest rates," Butler said. "Also, if international events don't stabilize any better than they are right now, that could drive up interest rates. You have a major event and suddenly rates are going to jackrabbit on you and it's going to have an impact on the confidence level of people."

In the meantime, many people are saying rates are about as low as they're going to get, so they'd better buy now, he said.

Dog Park: Future hangs in the balance



Independent Newspapers/Cecilia Chan

Sun City residents Bob and Eva Knight with their dachshunds, Marty and Heather, at the informal dog park on Del Webb Boulevard. The couple purchased the land and hopes the RCSC changes its mind and takes over control

RCSC has no plans to purchase the site

By Cecilia Chan

Independent Newspapers

RoseMarie Kirchen kept a watchful eye out for her black-and-white sheltie, Scott, as he trotted off unfettered at an unofficial neighborhood dog park.

Dog bowls and a coffee can filled with water sat by the rows of park benches. Plastic grocery bags, brooms and plenty of trash barrels dot the nearly two-acre park in the La Ronde Shopping Center on Del Webb Boulevard.

Sun City has no sanctioned dog park.

"He gets the chance to run off the lease," said Ms. Kirchen, who comes to the park every day. "I enjoy the camaraderie of the people and the dog has his friends, too."

For the past several years the park has been a meeting place for dogs and their owners. However, park's future now hangs in the balance.

Sun City residents and dog owners Robert and Eva Knight purchased the park in March and has offered to sell it at cost — \$150,000 — to the Recreation Centers of Sun City Board of Directors. Directors, citing various reasons including the Knights' stipulation that the site remain dog friendly, rejected the offer.

"If I hit a blank wall every place I go and the powers that be don't think enough of the proposal, that they think it's not worth anything to them, then I need to rethink the whole thing," said Mr. Knight, 62. "We can maintain it for an indefinite period of time if needed. But if anything were to happen to us, then where



Independent Newspapers/Cecilia Chan

RoseMarie Kirchen, who comes to the park daily with her dog, said Sun City needs a dog park.

would it be? Sure we may lose the dog park down the road."

The Knights purchased the land, zoned for residential development, to keep it a dog park. They said the park provides residents who live in condominiums, such as they do, a place to exercise their pets and to socialize with other pet owners.

The couple, who were bringing their dachshunds to

the site for more than five years, have explored many avenues to save the park before taking the financial plunge.

"I've been concerned for several years," Mr. Knight said. "It was owned by absentee owners whose business was in real estate development. I was concerned if it wasn't acquired

OVER

Dogs

Continued From Page 1

and protected, one of these days we would find out it was being developed or lose it."

The Knights said the recreation center was the logical choice to oversee the park.

"We need someone here all the time to take care of it," said Mr. Knight, who also is a Wyoming resident. "We are not here full time and not in the position to oversee it on a daily basis as the rec center will be."

Ms. Knight, 60, also said the rec center has the expertise to maintain the park.

"There's a group of dog park men assembled to take care of it," she said. "But over the long run it needs to be the rec center with its experience."

She said some of the trees need replacing, the sprinkler system needs some work and eventually the park needs to be fenced.

"For right now, Bob and I have decided to take it one step at a time, securing the future of the dog park," said Ms. Knight.

Currently, the volunteer group Sun City Prides dumps the trash and help clean the park.

And Sun City Homeowners Association helps pay the water bills, which averages about \$20 a month.

"We do have a concern about it," said Marge Murphy, HOA board member. "I know (residents) love it and enjoy being there."

Rec board President Jim Kuchler said the nine directors decided to pass on the "unsolicited" offer.

"If the conditions that they want to put on it to sell the property changes significantly we may further consider it," he said, also citing concerns over liability. "But right now the issue is closed for us."

Although President Kuchler declined to specify what conditions needed to be changed, the Knights' letter states they want a "protective covenant" requiring the site remained a park that permitted dogs.

"Hypothetically, we are unwilling to have covenants placed on any property we buy that restricts the use of the property," President Kuchler said. "If we buy property we want full discretion on how to use it."

Jean Rohwedder, who comes to the park every day

What do you think?

Do you think Sun City needs a dog park, why or why not. What do you think the RCSC should do? Write us at 10220 W. Bell Road, Suite 116, Sun City, AZ, 85351, e-mail cchan@newszap.com or call Speak Out at 445-2892.

with her border terrier, Bogie, thinks a dog park is an asset.

"Most communities have a dog park," she said. "I think it's a piece of the community that is missing."

Jean Buck, president of the 10-year-old Best Friends Dog Club, said a dog park is a win-win situation for both the owner and dog.

"Dogs need a place where they can exercise and the spin-off benefit is the socialization that come for dog owners," she said. "I know a majority of our members would really welcome

a dog park."

Currently the roughly 100 club members take their dogs to a 50-foot-by-50-foot training yard on RCSC property for obedience and agility classes.

Club member Dianne Needham noted that Sun City West has had a dog park for years and in the future Sun City will need one, too.

She said dogs need to socialize just like humans and having a dog park will be a selling point to potential residents.

"Dogs are here and they are here to stay," she said. "People who have pets, it's like their children."

Post your comments on this issue at newsblog.info/0302

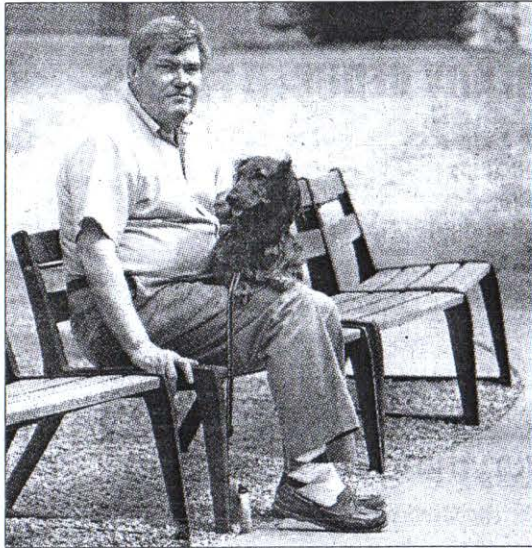
News editor Cecilia Chan can be reached at 972-6101 or cchan@newszap.com

DAILY NEWS-SUN

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 25, 2004

Doggie-park owner wants RCSC to reconsider

Bob Knight and Marty pause on a bench at the Duffy Land Dog Park. Knight and his wife, Eva, purchased the parcel and wanted the Recreation Centers of Sun City to purchase it at their cost of \$150,000.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Robert Knight is dumbfounded by the Recreation Centers of Sun City board's decision not to buy his dog-friendly park and still hopes the nine directors will see it his way.

"I still think the park would be a meaningful asset to Sun City," Knight said. "All it takes is a little bit of vision to see that. I can't for the life of me see where the board is coming from."

Robert Knight and his wife, Eva, formed Duffy Land Dog Park LLC and purchased the park behind Washington Federal Bank at Del Webb and Thunderbird boulevards at the end of March, and hoped to sell it to the recreation centers at cost — \$150,000. The property once held a \$750,000 price tag before the Knights negotiated the lower price.

The couple sent the RCSC board a letter, offering to sell the property to the corporation

and were surprised to receive a brief rejection letter in the mail about two weeks later. More letters followed, and the public offered its opinions, but earlier this month, the RCSC made their decision to reject the offer.

"It was the unanimous opinion of the board that we not get involved in it," Director Jim Frederick said. "All around it wasn't a good deal."

The Knights' first letter stated that the RCSC would have to maintain the park as a dog-friendly property.

"We are willing to sell the property to the Rec. Centers at our cost," Robert Knight wrote. "However, we would want to add a protective covenant requiring the property to remain a park that would permit dogs. We believe that such a park would be warmly received by Sun Citians."

The RCSC outright declined the offer in a

See PARK, A5

OVER

From A1

letter with little explanation. The Knights then asked the board to enumerate their concerns so they may address them, still hopeful the purchase could take place.

Jim Kuchler, RCSC president, responded with a lengthy letter, bulleted with several concerns such as insurance liability, monitoring and the possibility of unhappy neighbors. The first concern listed, however, was the dog-friendly covenant which Kuchler called a "deal stopper." The board agreed that the corporation couldn't buy a restricted-use property.

Robert Knight said he had re-opened the conversation by advising the board he was open to suggestions on how they might use the property.

"Our concern first and foremost is about the people and what the park means to them," he wrote in his third letter to the RCSC board. "We recognize that circumstances change with time and that a protective covenant should never run into perpetuity. ... Other approaches may be reasonable and we have no desire to unnecessarily tie the hands of the board. If the board has any proposals, we would be glad to consider them."

After being notified of the board's final decision, Robert Knight wondered if the board realized he was willing to bend to accommodate their wishes.

"I think as far as this board is concerned, they don't have any intention to reconsider. I don't think they considered it in the first place," he said. "Covenants should always expire after a reasonable amount of time. We'd consider their alternative suggestion."

Jim Frederick, board director, said even if the covenant were lifted, there are still too many reasons why the RCSC shouldn't buy the

park.

"It's an insurance problem, it's a problem with monitoring and maintaining the property, it's not a practical situation," Frederick said. "We're not interested. Period. All nine members were against it."

Chuck Chadbourn of Sun City has publicly advocated the RCSC purchasing the

park. As a former RCSC board member, he doesn't agree with the current board's decision.

"These people are far too political," Chadbourn said. "If they were making sensible arguments, this wouldn't be so infuriating. They're so controlling right now that they can't see beyond their selfish interests."

Robert Knight said he doesn't like the way the RCSC board has conducted business on the matter.

"This hasn't been a give-and-take situation, this has been a one-way show," he said.

Annie Karstens may be reached at 876-2532 or akarstens@aztrib.com.

SC HOA opposes density

Proposed housing discussed at Sunland site

By Cecilia Chan

Independent Newspapers

A proposal to build 229 homes on 27 acres in the heart of Sun City met stiff opposition last week from Sun City Homeowners Association Board of Directors and Maricopa County officials who say it is too jam-packed.

CBJ Development, Inc., and Arizona International Investments want to build the single-lot patio homes on the vacant parcel adjacent to Sunland Mortuary and Cemetery.

"The density is way too high for what we are looking for, what the Sun City Homeowners Association is looking for, what Luke Air Force Base is looking for," county planner Robert Kuhfuss said at a meeting to address deficiencies in

the developer's site plan.

Although 37 homes were dropped from the original plan, eight homes per acre is still too high, Mr. Kuhfuss said. County staff would support four to six homes per acre.

"We are still in favor of building it," said Jim Corcoran, HOA president. "Our problem is the density factor."

He said the HOA favors 180 homes or six homes per acre — what is the average in the community. He brought with him a petition of 500 signatures of Sun City residents against the proposed density.

HOA Vice President Tom Stolt broached the issue of access into the development via Sunland Drive, which the county owns a portion and

See **Housing** — Page 7

Housing

Continued From Page 1

Sunland Mortuary owns a portion.

"The road through the cemetery is deplorable," Mr. Stolt said. "We want assurance the road is maintained equal to what the county maintains on its portion of the road."

He also said with one to two vehicles for each of the 180 homes, traffic on the two-lane roadway would be a "mess" and "nightmare." The HOA wants the road expanded to four lanes.

Those issues, including public access on the privately owned

portion of Sunland Drive will need ironing out in a traffic impact study, said Gerald Toscano, county senior civil engineer. He said the developer would need to provide a drainage report, too.

The HOA also wants to ensure the proposed development would be age restricted to 55 and older.

"We want our people here to be counted as part of Sun City," assured Brad Junker, CBJ president and engineer. Mr. Junker said the Recreation Centers of Sun City Board of Directors already voiced support of the project.

Darren Gerard, county planning deputy director, said staff in general do not support senior

overlays because it is a "big civil rights issue" trying to enforce it.

However, he said the project mostly likely would be granted a senior overlay because there is no opposition and if not granted, something else could be done.

"As far as density goes we will look at it again and see what can be done," Mr. Junker said.

Mr. Kuhfuss said the developer can either meet all staff's requirements to garner support or chose to move ahead to the planning commission to try and win approval. The issue also would need to be voted by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

Following the hour meeting, Mr. Junker said the project, in the works since last year, was supported by the previous HOA board.

"The new board sent us a new letter opposed to it," he said. "It took us off guard."

He also said he was taken off guard by the senior overlay issue, never thinking there might be a problem for the development to be absorbed into Sun City.

The homes proposed range from 1,200 to 1,500 square feet and already some 400 names are on a waiting list to buy into the development, he said.

He said the ownership, Arizona International Investments, will have to evaluate the density issue to see if it is flexible. Fewer homes on each acres would mean more expensive homes.

"Most are retired and on fixed incomes," he said. "To keep the price low we need to have more density."

After mortuary owner Service Corporation International sold the land, the Sun City Garden Club was displaced after 30 years of cultivating 10 acres of the site. It provided a bulk of the harvest to charities such as West Side Food Bank and Olive Branch Senior Center.

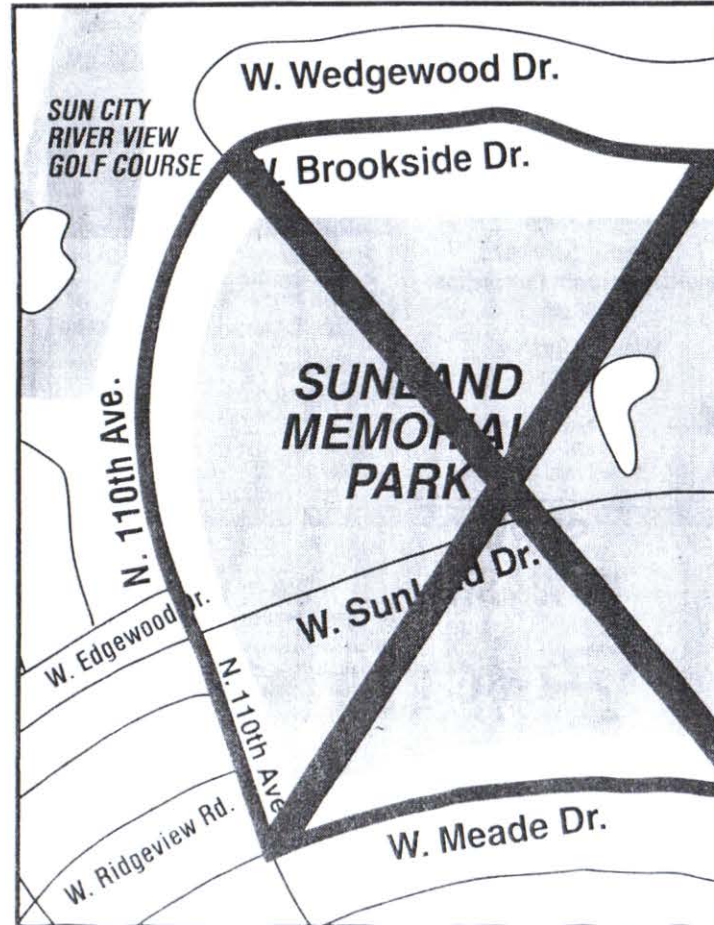
Today, the group is just called the Garden Club and its membership has dwindled down to a little

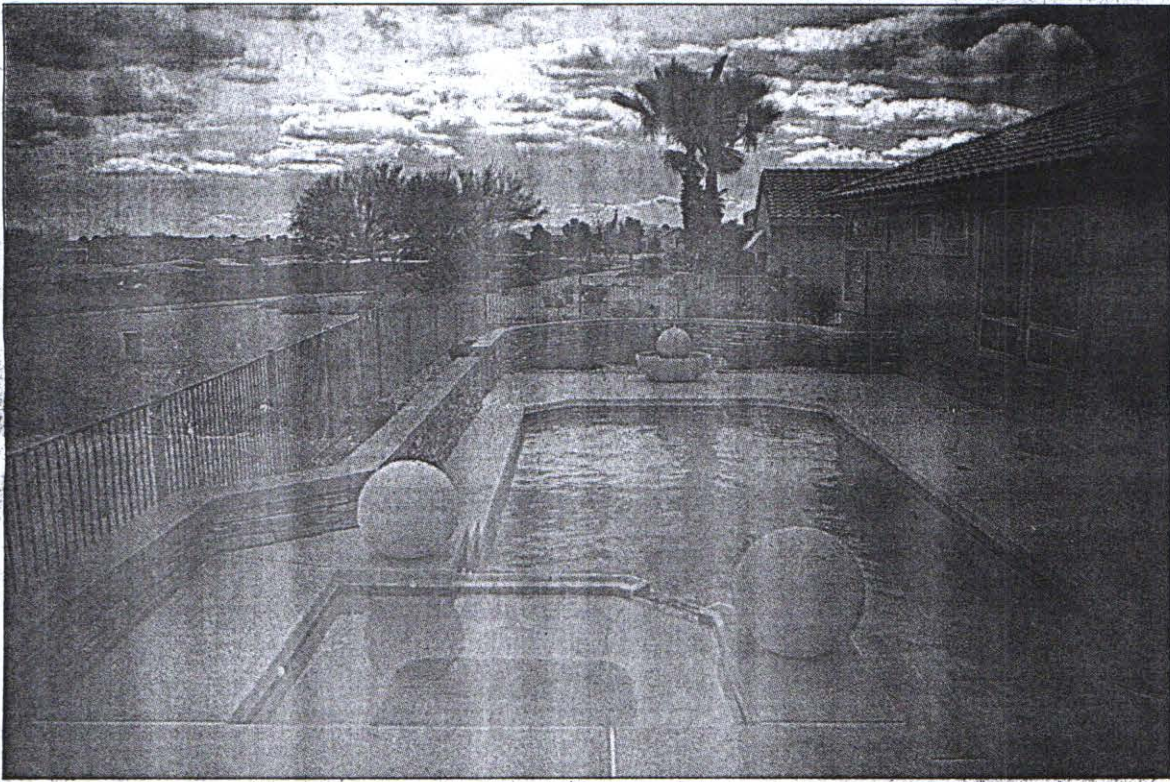
more than 100 from a high of 300 who meet monthly for breakfast, said Dan Harris, who added members at least still have their backyard gardens.

"Who wants to live up against a cemetery and a dog cemetery," he said. "Who would want to live there."

Post your comments on this issue at newsblog.info/0302

News editor Cecilia Chan can be reached at 972.6101 or cchan@newszap.com





THOMAS BOGGAN/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fran Thorpe, a RE/MAX Achievers real estate agent, said this home in Sun City Grand is one of the least expensive homes on a golf course in the West Valley.

From desert to stucco, housing market transforms West Valley

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The West Valley real estate market outpaced even the wildest predictions last year, but the fuel that fed the boom may have pushed affordability right out of the region.

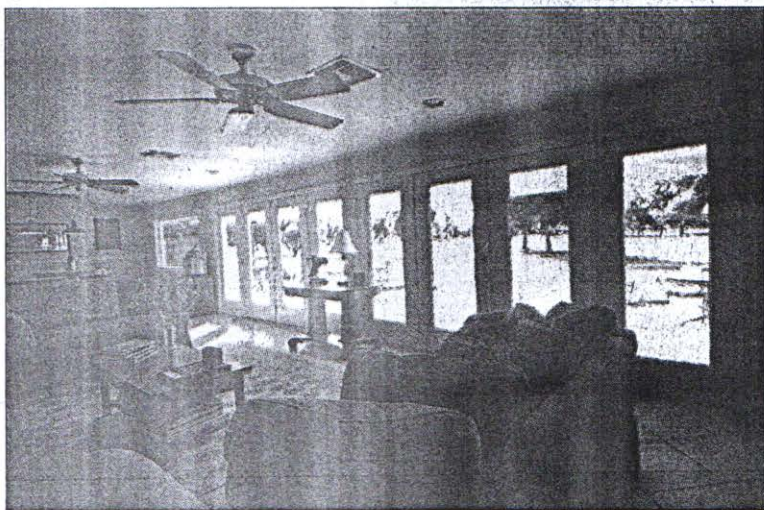
What was once a distant desert brimming with affordable housing is now earning a reputation for high-end homes, custom designs and blazing fast sales. Gone are the days when new homes or resales cost well under \$150,000. Real estate professionals say you'll be hard-pressed to find any Northwest Valley home for less than \$200,000.

"The Northwest Valley is coming into its own," said Realtor Ernie Bigsby of Windermere West Valley Real Estate. "The growth is phenomenal, and it's possible homes will appreciate 10 to 20 percent a year. It could continue to slow, but I don't think it could stop. The good Lord isn't building any more land, but the people are still coming."

As the great Northwest Valley land rush seems to be leveling out, homeowners, buyers and sellers are adjusting to a changing real estate climate.

Home prices soar

Five years ago, people were



PETE PALLAGI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

This Sun City home, which sits on Willowbrook Golf Course, was purchased for \$200,000 and the owners poured more than \$100,000 worth of renovations into it. The home is now listed at \$589,000.

scrambling to the West Valley to grab homes priced below the county average, said Jay Butler, director of the Arizona Real Estate Center at Arizona State University. In 2001, the median resale home price in Maricopa County was \$136,000. At the same time, the Sun City median price was running \$99,000 and Sun City West was \$135,000.

The rest of the West Valley fell between the two retirement communities, with Peoria having the highest median prices at \$128,500, Glendale homes going for a median of \$126,500, followed by \$125,000 in Surprise and \$98,145 in El Mirage. It was vastly different by 2005. Peoria had the highest home resale values with a median price of \$250,000, followed by \$240,195 in Surprise and

\$221,900 in Glendale.

In the middle, Sun City homes were going for a median price of \$185,000, Sun City West was pulling in \$224,000 and El Mirage had more than doubled to \$199,000.

Peoria surpassed the county average in 2005, which was \$245,000, with Surprise, Glendale and Sun City West also closing in on the average.

Perusing West Valley real estate listings today yields homes selling for \$500,000 up to \$2.5 million. Bigsby said the cost of empty, undeveloped acre lots in rural Surprise or Peoria also has skyrocketed. Ten years ago, 1 acre in those areas cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000,

See HOUSING, A5

HOUSING: Affordability may return to WV market

From A1

he said. Today, the same acre costs between \$125,000 and \$250,000.

Mixed blessings

Affordability was the West Valley's best selling points five years ago, Butler said. Young couples flocked to the area, attracted to the idea of owning a new home in some cases for less than they paid in rent. Almost immediately, the secret was out. People from all over the country, especially California, bought vacation homes, investment properties or made the West Valley their new home, Butler said. With that, new challenges arose.

"One of the big selling points was the affordability," he said. "If you lose that, you start competing with California and other areas and you have difficulties."

Although more demand can mean higher price appreciation, it also means more traffic and job demands. For the West Valley to thrive, it can't sell homes as expensive as Scottsdale without offering a job base with Scottsdale salaries or freeways with Scottsdale accessibility, Butler said.

"The real issue for these areas is adding to their commercial base, bringing in retail and especially jobs," he said. "Where you will have issues is the affordable housing will be pushed further and further out, which will create more congestion issues. If energy prices stay high and congestion continues, a lot of people are going to wonder if it's worth moving that far out."

The bad news for sellers, investors and those relying on refinancing is home prices may decline significantly, Butler said. The good news is the West Valley could return to its affordable roots, which was key to its initial development, he said.

Sun Cities

Nestled between booming communities, Sun City and Sun City West ran the risk of being overshadowed during the recent run-up. The opposite happened, Butler said, and the Sun Cities shone

brighter as niche communities.

"The Sun Cities sort of scream the active adult community name while places like Trilogy are still marketing themselves," Butler said, adding many retirees can't or don't want to spend \$400,000 on a home. "Sun City offers relatively inexpensive housing ... What's being built lately are higher-end retirement communities, but a lot of people are going into retirement seeing what's happening to health care costs and pensions, so there is a cautious concern about their retirement."

The Sun Cities renovation trend has taken off and seniors are cashing in. Fran Thorpe, a RE/MAX Achievers real estate agent, is listing a renovated golf course home off Union Hills Drive and 99th Avenue for \$589,000. Two years ago, the owners purchased it for \$200,000, then made about \$120,000 worth of improvements.

"The home is so different than Sun City Grand or Sun City West, it has an ambience," Thorpe said. "There's a new wave of people coming in, and they're gutting homes to redo them."

Thorpe also is listing a home in Sun City West's Corte Bella community for \$769,000 and one in Sun City Grand for \$699,000. She estimates it will take about 90 days to sell those homes.

"This is one of the cheapest houses on a golf course," she said of the Grand home off Reems and Mountain View roads. "No one could have foretold what the market did last year."

Another plus for the Sun Cities is their proximity to some of the best medical care in the Valley.

"Sun City has the medical support systems that the Verados (at the White Tanks) and the Vistancias (in north Peoria) don't have yet. Those are comforting to have nearby," Butler said. "We originally thought (the Sun Cities) were far out, but they're not anymore. The Sun Cities will hold their own."

Surprise

Jim Smith's Surprise

home is on the market for \$1.75 million. He designed and built the 3,500-square-foot, energy-efficient home and a research-level observatory five years ago on 5 acres of land off 163rd Avenue and Dale Lane, near Jomax Road. Smith wouldn't divulge his initial expense, but when asked why he's moving, he replied, "\$1.75 million dollars."

"When we found it and saw the acreage and mountains, we just had to build a house here," Smith said. "Someone told me that in five to 10 years here the home values would be surprisingly different, and he was right on target."

Bigsby, his Realtor, said it's not unusual for mountainside homes in Surprise to sell for a million or more. The house next to Smith's is on the market for \$900,000, and large custom homes are filling vacant lots. In Surprise's suburban areas, one real estate listing advertised a new 1,700-square-foot home for \$296,000.

Glendale

Dan Kaelin has lived in the Arrowhead Lakes neighborhood for 2½ years, but isn't new to the West Valley. In 1999, he bought a home at Happy Valley Road in north Peoria and decided the West Valley would be a gold mine. He invested in three more area houses.

"That risk you're talking about, we took that in 1999 and we just kept buying here. I saw the potential," said Kaelin, who's making improvements to his Arrowhead Lakes home. "Arrowhead is like Scottsdale living without the traffic and without those prices. Even though prices are high here, they're twice as

high in Scottsdale."

Thorpe said Glendale is a West Valley anchor because of the new Cardinal Stadium and the Coyotes Arena, not to mention the more mature businesses and retail centers, like Arrowhead Towne Center mall.

"Here you're finding Glendale is making (the West Valley) much more attractive," Thorpe said.

Peoria

Peoria's proximity to Loop 101, Interstate 17, Glendale's stadiums and its own retail hubs is enough incentive for buyers to give the far Northwest Valley a chance, said Michelle Woodlee, sales representative for Pulte Homes' Westwing Mountain Phase II, a nearly sold out development off Lake Pleasant Parkway and Buckhorn Trail, north of Happy Valley Road.

The miles have closed in between north Peoria and major roads and retailers, so much so that Westwing has only a few homes left costing between \$494,000 and \$630,000, Woodlee said. Resales, she added, are selling for even higher. Since sales began in October 2004, home prices have seen an increase of about \$110,000. And the Vistancia and Trilogy at Vistancia communities west of Westwing are expected to be home to approximately 50,000 residents at build out.

"It's a pretty hot area — it's still accessible and it's beautiful here," she said. "The prices are actually attractive. There's still a high demand and it's not slowing down."

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

Retirement-community expert best for buyers, sellers

By David M. Brown
Special for The Republic | azcentral.com

Area specialists have their foot in the door before you do.

That's why working with a retirement-community expert is the best plan whether you're buying or selling, said Jim



Jim Swanson

Swanson, an associate broker with the Sun City West office of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. "People have prior homebuying experience, but most of the buyers we deal with are entering into their first experience in a retirement community. Even buying a second home is a major financial move, so they need accurate and complete information in order to make informed decisions," he said.

"They are typically moving away from family and friends. That's stressful, it's emotional, and if the wrong decision is made, it can and usually does have a devastating impact."

Here are some tips from Swanson, a longtime Sun City West resident:



An area specialist can be helpful in choosing a retirement home. This model is a Sun City original and is now a museum exhibit. JIM SWANSON

» **A good specialist knows good value.** "Sometimes, people pay too much and sometimes people are misinformed and think they can pay less. When that happens, they miss out on what they really want/need. That's disappointing and expensive—especially in an appreciating market."

» **Buy right, sell right.** "An area specialist knows the key features and benefits of specific models, so he or she can do a better job of marketing a listing than a less-experienced agent. If a seller lists with someone out-of-area, the house might be improperly priced, so sellers leave money on the table or they

don't attract the traffic they deserve."

» **Efficiency and expertise.** "A specialist knows the various floor plans and what works and what to avoid. He or she can also make the process more convenient by knowing the requirements of the community and its HOAs, the local lending officers and title/escrow officers who get deals closed on time."

"That local agent knows the best licensed home inspectors familiar enough with the homes that they know the building methods used and can point out design weaknesses or trouble spots."

A specialist knows the

strengths and weaknesses of the area, Swanson said. "If he or she can help find a match, great. But it does no one any good to try to fit a client into a community that doesn't offer what suits their needs."

» **Area specialists are acclimation experts.** "Senior buyers ... want to know good area restaurants, who are local tradesmen and reliable handymen, and how to get that all-important Recreation Card for activities. "Use a local agent who truly knows the amenities of the area—not only the recreational and social offerings, but one who is also familiar with the support services that will be of greater importance 'down the road' as you age in place," Swanson said.

» **The true cost of residency.** "Active adult communities have 'buy-in' fees in addition to transfer and closing fees, variously called Asset Preservation and Capital Improvement fees, and then there are those Rec and HOA fees, too. A specialist knows these and can explain them."

» **Best foot forward.** Before selling, does the home need to be repainted, recarpeted, staged? "A full-service specialist can recommend these and

coordinate them quickly because he or she knows the area business community," Swanson said. "A local agent knows what buyers typically accept and expect, so sellers aren't spending fix-up money in the wrong areas."

» **Familiarity.** Family members outside the area often are called on to help with the decision to sell a senior's house. "When this happens, it is so important to list with a local agent who knows how to properly describe and represent that home to the market."

"Agents from outside the area aren't going to know important details such as transfer fees and procedures or the ins and outs of dealing with HOAs. That can end up being a real disservice to the family because these items can complicate a sale," Swanson said.

"When the decision-makers are away from the area and are handling the process from a distance, it's best they use someone very near the property. An area specialist can also be relied upon to help handle many of the various steps along the way."

Brown is a Valley-based freelancer (azwriter.com).

www.YourWestValley.com

LAND USE

Residents oppose development

Youngtown project could create traffic, crime issues

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Residents in Sun City's Rancho Estates area properties are concerned a planned Youngtown development will create problems for their neighborhood.

More than 50 residents of Sun City ranchettes, properties with more than one or more acres originally designed as equestrian properties allowing out buildings, packed the Sun City Home Owners Association meeting room Dec. 19 to seek help in stopping the development.

"This does not fit the character of our neighborhood and we are afraid it will set a precedent," said resident Doug Hill.

Strategic Development of North America approached Youngtown officials with a rezoning request for the fronting 112th Avenue and extend-



Residents of Sun City's ranchette properties packed the Sun City Home Owners Association meeting room Dec. 19 to seek help in stopping a dense Youngtown residential development adjacent to their homes. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

ing west between North Kolina Lane and West Cumberland Drive. The property is zoned for single-family dwelling and rural districts.

The proposed development property was once within Sun City but was annexed by Youngtown in 1996.

SDNA officials want to con-

struct a planned area development with selected use for only single-family residences, according to John Luke of SDNA in a letter to residents.

"The current site has the Hansen residence and two out buildings," he stated in the letter. "The remaining part of

» See Land use on page 18

Published by Independent Newsmedia Inc., USA

INDEPENDENT

Land use

» From page 1
the site has been graded or disturbed.”

Mr. Hill said the development plan is to build 130 starter homes, including single and two-story, on the property. He believes that will bring increased traffic into the ranchette neighborhood.

“This could bring up to 200 cars per day out of there, we have no street lights and the roads are designed more for a rural neighborhood,” Mr. Hill said.

Resident Bob Dunn is concerned the development could bring changes to some ranchette property owners with alterations to 112th Avenue. He said surveyors were on 112th Avenue in early December taking measurements, but

when he asked they would not share what they were doing. Mr. Dunn said he had an idea about the activity.

“Our neighborhood streets are 28-30 feet with a five-foot utility easement and a 15-foot county easement,” he said. “If someone decides there needs to be sidewalks, all properties that front 112th Avenue could lose 15 feet of their property.”

Mr. Hill also said the portion of the property proposed for development with no structures has ground covering construction debris that could include lead paint and asbestos.

“Why would anyone want that disturbed (for construction)?” he asked.

While SCHOA has no authority to intervene on property and zoning issues, especially in another community, the board agreed to help in any way it could.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are your opinions on this issues?

Send responses to rbradshaw@newszap.com.

Jim Powell, SCHOA board member, suggested residents contact Maricopa County District 4 Supervisor Clint Hickman, since the county is the equivalent of municipal government for unincorporated areas like Sun City.

“I will contact Mr. Hickman’s office on this issue to make things more efficient,” said Rick Gray, SCHOA board member and a former state legislator. “This is an obvious concern because you bought there for the character of the neighborhood.”

Mr. Gray also agreed to be a liaison between SCHOA and the ranchette residents.

Mr. Hill said residents

had started a petition opposing the development and it had 68 resident signatures by last week. Greg Eisert, SCHOA board member, said the petition was a good start, but suggested residents have an attorney review it to make sure it met legal standards.

“There are issues — density, environmental and traffic,” he said. “But it is foremost a county issue.”

Tom Wilson, SCHOA compliance manager, said the agency was approached about taking a pie-shaped lot, referred to as Tract D, that abutts the southern line of the proposed development site out of the Sun City deed restrictions. However, he said that was not possible, and it would be to SCHOA’s advantage to keep the restrictions even if it were possible to take that property out.

“If we hang on to it we can keep control over Tract D,” he said.

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



Rick Gray



Greg Eisert



Tom Wilson

REAL ESTATE

New home availability jumps in Sun City

New home availability jumped last week in Sun City, based on information from Homesnap, a real estate search platform for people to explore homes and search MLS real estate listings — online or from a mobile phone.

The 85351 ZIP code in Sun City went from 252 available homes to 262 in the last week. Three weeks ago, there were 244 available homes in that ZIP code.

Most Northwest Valley communities fluctuated slightly up or down in the last week.

The 85387 ZIP code in Surprise went from 132 to 136 in the last week while the 85379 ZIP code in Surprise went down from 155 to 147.

North Peoria continued to dominate the home listings. The 85383 ZIP code finally topped the 400 mark in available homes, going from 399 to 406 in the last seven-day period. In early January, there were 357 available homes in North Peoria.

The list may not represent all homes listed for sale in

the following communities, just a quick glimpse at overall homes listed in the last week.

SUN CITY

85351: There were 262 homes available last week with a price range of \$70,000 to \$151,000. The home availability was 252 the previous week.

85373: This ZIP code had 98 available homes with a price range of \$60,000 to \$320,000. There were 99 available homes the previous week.

SUN CITY WEST

85375: There were 213 homes available with a price range of \$123,000 to \$240,000. The home availability was 211 the previous week.

EL MIRAGE

85335: This ZIP code had 60 available homes ranging in price from \$90,000 to \$320,000. There were 51 available homes the previous week.

WITTMANN

85361: There were 139 properties available. The property availability was

132 the previous week.

SURPRISE

85387: This ZIP code had 136 homes with a price range of \$49,000 to \$334,000. There were 132 available homes listed the previous week.

85374: There were 205 homes listed with a price range of \$54,000 to \$238,000. The home availability was 207 the previous week.

85379: This ZIP code had 147 homes with a price range of \$155,000 to \$307,000. There were 155 available homes listed the previous week.

85388: There were 58 homes listed with a price range of \$3.3 million to \$166,000. The home availability was 64 the previous week.

BUCKEYE

85396: There were 212 properties available. There were 215 available properties listed the previous week.

WADDELL

85355: This ZIP code had 48 homes listed in the last week with a price of



This townhouse on North 111th Avenue in Sun City was listed at \$125,000 in the last week. The home has 1,318 square feet and features two bedrooms and two baths. There is a green grass courtyard and a one-car garage.

\$218,000 to \$610,000. The home availability was 50 the previous week.

GLENDALE

85308: There were 205 homes listed in the last week with a price range of \$120,000 to \$319,000. There were 199 available homes listed the previous week.

85306: This ZIP code had 32 homes for sale with a price range of \$875,000 to \$165,000. The home avail-

ability was 38 the previous week.

85304: There were 60 homes listed with a price range of \$689,000 to \$86,000. There were 67 available homes listed the previous week.

85302: This ZIP code had 51 listed homes with a price range of \$288,000 to \$85,000. The home availability was 46 the previous week.

PEORIA

85383: There were 406 homes listed with a price range of \$181,000 to \$300,000. There were 406 homes listed the previous week.

85382: This ZIP code had 105 available homes with a price range of \$147,000 to \$359,000. The home availability was 112 the previous week.



Senior citizens who move within the Midwest have housing options from luxury condominiums to retirement complexes.

Pre-retirement developments are popular in Sun Belt



Don DeBat

PHOENIX, Ariz.—Time stands still in Sun City, a sun-drenched retirement haven bordered by stucco walls, orange trees and medical clinics.

Hundreds of trim ranch houses with green crushed rock "lawns" line wide, spotlessly clean asphalt streets and cul-de-sacs, less than 20 miles northwest of downtown Phoenix.

Houses at Sun City have brick fronts and two-car garages. Many are accented with

cactus, white wrought iron railings and American flags.

On a weekday morning this spring, a white-haired 75-year-old woman pedaled her racer bicycle down Cameo Drive near 99th Street. Moments later, an octogenarian rolled by in an immaculately preserved 1978 Chevy Nova.

With visions of the quiet life dancing in their heads, some 50,000 snowbirds, over the past 30 years, have flocked to Sun City, probably the nation's most well-known retirement development.

Back in 1959, seniors could buy a 1,000-square-foot two-bedroom home without air-conditioning for \$8,000. Today, that house is reselling for \$43,000 to \$51,000, according to O'Keefe Better Homes Real Estate.

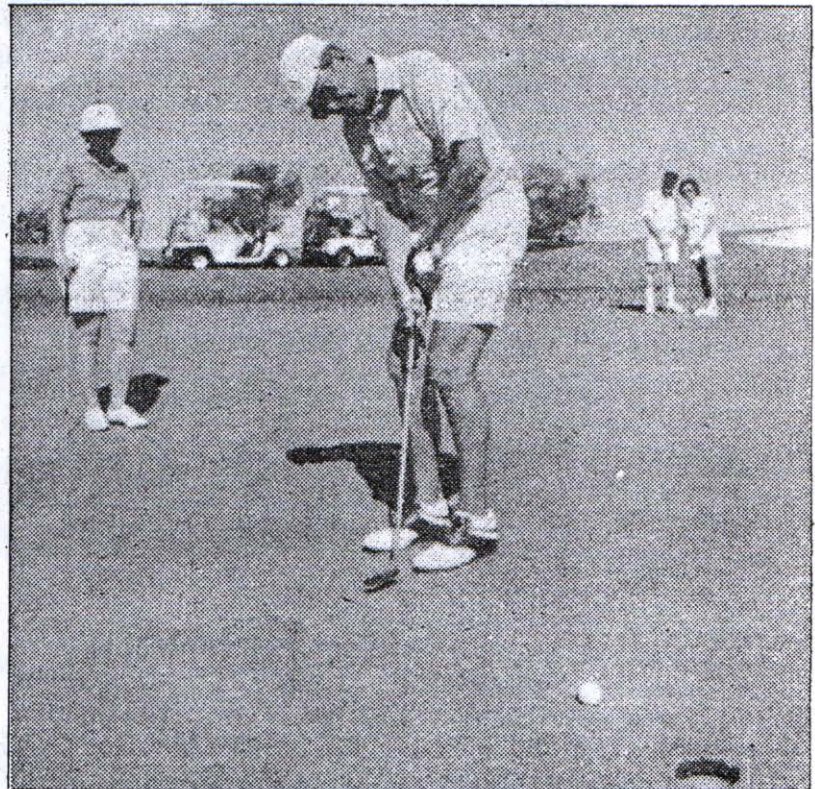
The market for newer housing still is strong—at nearby Sun City West—but a change in retirement patterns is catching up with this 1950s model retirement community.

Like tombstones, rows of for-sale signs dot many of Sun City's streets. A few months ago, a half dozen homes were on the market on a one-block stretch of Cameo Drive alone, where many 70- to 80-year-olds live.

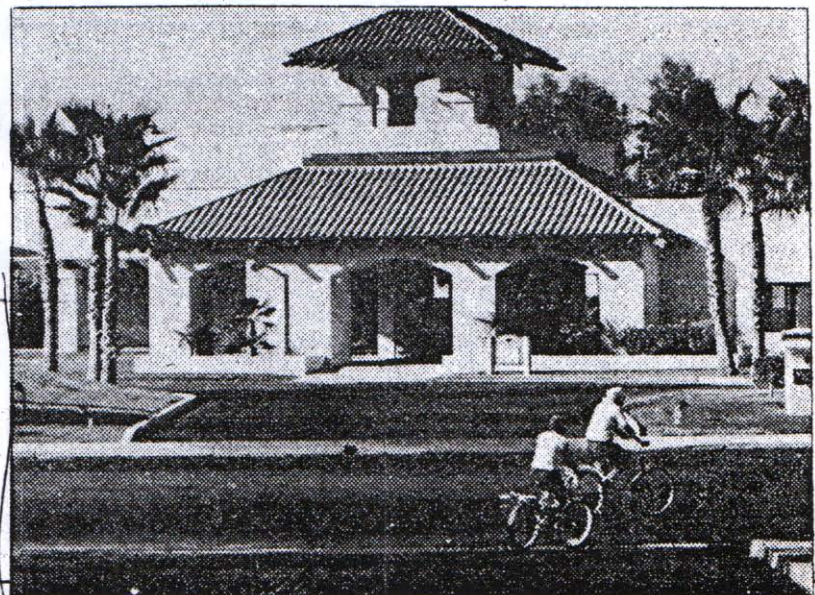
"First you buy, then you die," quipped one hard-nosed realty agent who thrives on the steady turnover in retirement property.

Some of Sun City's older residents sell their homes

Turn to Page 19



ABOVE: Arizona retirees enjoy golf at the Sun City West development. **BELOW:** Biking is popular at nearby Westbrook Village.



VF SC Real Estate

(H)

RETIREMENT LIVING

DeBat

Continued from Page 9

and move to rental apartments and retirement homes, another realty agent said.

For many world-weary seniors, retirement is a time to buy a home in Arizona or Florida, travel abroad, putter around the garden or a basement workshop, and baby-sit the grandchildren.

Some elderly people just hope they can put their feet up and do nothing—for a decade or two. A senior citizen's worst nightmare is to retire, buy that last dream home, then die soon afterward.

Maybe that's why more and more Midwesterners are buying "pre-retirement" homes in the Sun Belt while maintaining a primary residence in the North. A pre-retirement residence is a second home or condominium in a resort area purchased by people in their late 40s and early 50s.

Real estate experts say Americans aged 45 and older represent the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. They're expected to account for 92 percent of all population growth through 2010, according to the Census Bureau.

The explosive growth rate expected among 40- to 50-year-olds in the next 20 years should fuel strong demand for pre-retirement communities, predicted Robert Hendrickson, director of real estate consulting services for the Los Angeles office of Kenneth Leventhal & Co.

The lifestyle is youth-oriented at Westbrook Village, a 640-acre pre-retirement development in Peoria, Ariz. You have to be at least 40 to buy a house in the development, and the average age of the residents is 58.

On the edge of the desert on land rimmed on the north by majestic mountains, Westbrook Village is an "active adult" community. Plans call for 2,200 homes and condominiums clustered in "villages," or neighborhoods, around a central recreation core and the fairways of an 18-hole golf course.

Stroll the streets of the development and you'll see many suntanned 40- to 50-year-old residents walking briskly, riding bikes or driving golf carts.

The recreation center features a swimming pool, therapy pool, exercise rooms and an auditorium with stage, dance floor, kitchen and billiard room.

About 1,800 housing units have been sold in the giant planned-unit development since November, 1982, said Dick Buckley, sales and marketing manager for UDC Homes, developer of the community.

"Many of the younger buyers at Westbrook Village purchase a home as a vacation retreat, then plan to retire here later," said sales associate Ella Jones.

The architecture is Spanish mission-style, a popular design in the Southwest. Houses have square roofs crowned with red clay tile. Single-family homes and cluster condos range in price from about \$69,900 to \$128,900.

Not far from Westbrook Village is Sun City West. A decade ago, Del Webb Corp., developers of Sun City, launched the development to cater to the younger, more affluent and active retiree market.

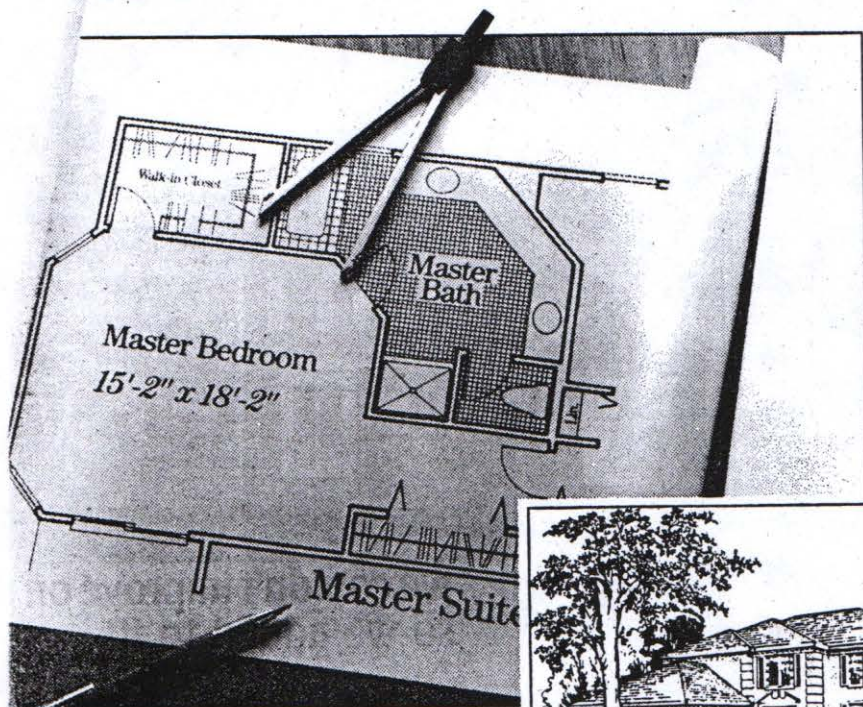
A six-lane, palm tree-lined highway leads to Sun City West, which

Turn to Page 20



Colored crushed rock at Westbrook Village near Phoenix creates the green look Midwesterners expect in front of homes.

IF YOU COULD DESIGN YOUR OWN HOME...



The Mayfair from \$279,900.

ould be elegant in concept, in scale. It would reflect the high standard set for both a luxurious lifestyle and investment. Responding to these needs, we offer our finest portfolio of eight luxury homes in the Hawthorn Club Estate Homes. Each home is on a fully improved one-half acre site, these homes range up to 6 bedrooms and 3,284 sq. ft. Priced from \$244,900, they offer many features you would have a hard time finding elsewhere, like two-story granite bar, large cultured marble master baths, gourmet masonry fireplaces, base-coated conditioning and lavish landscaping.



THE HAWTHORN CLUB ESTATE HOMES

In the lovely community of Vernon Hills, the Hawthorn Club is close to shopping, fine schools, dining and entertainment and excellent recreational amenities, including the adjacent golf course.

Located amid the rolling countryside on Evergreen Drive on the south side of Rt. 45 between Town Line Road and Half Day Road (Rt. 22).

Preview showings from 10 to 6 Monday through Saturday and 11 to 6 Sunday. For information, please call 816-3586.

UNITED DEVELOPMENT HOMES

RETIREMENT LIVING

DeBat

Continued from Page 19

has 18,000 residents. Along with businesses and shopping facilities, the self-contained community has churches and synagogues.

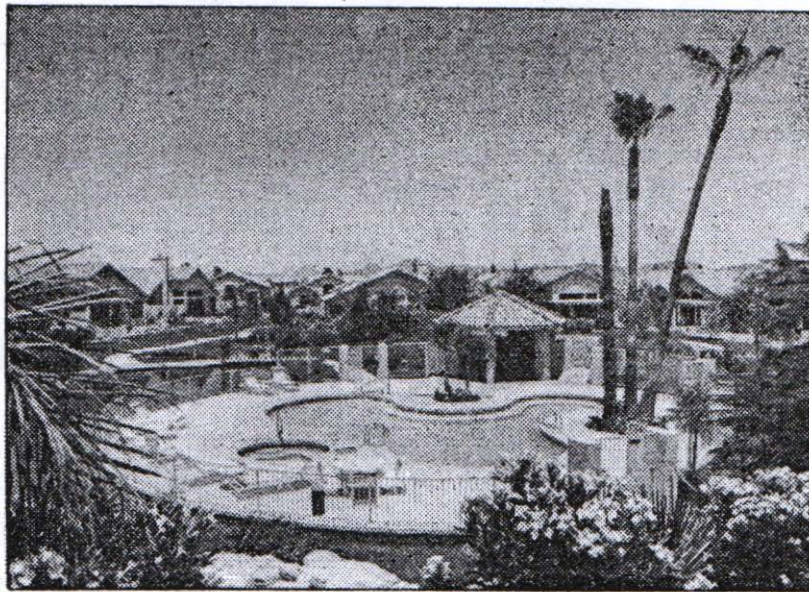
Drive the immaculately clean streets of Sun City West and you'll see dozens of stucco homes with red-tile roofs, sod lawns and patios. Many of the homes back up to the Hillcrest Golf Course.

A new line of larger houses unveiled this year at Sun City West feature three bedrooms, a den, two baths, an Arizona room and an expanded open kitchen.

There are 16 single-family home, duplex and cluster condo models on display at Sun City West. Base prices range from \$72,000 to \$194,000. One of the best-selling models is a ranch with 1,949 square feet of living area and a base price of \$116,500.

The Mediterranean-style ranch homes have a number of standard features designed for retirees.

Bathtubs have grab bars. Elec-



What Arizona complex would be complete without a swimming pool and palm trees?

trical outlets are raised about six inches higher than in conventional housing to make them easier to reach. Light switches in the bedroom, bath and hall are luminous

so they can be seen easily.

Don DeBat is the Chicago Sun-Times' assistant managing editor for residential and commercial development.

Bethlehem Woods has list of would-be tenants

Rental units at the Bethlehem Woods Retirement Living Center, under construction in La Grange Park, are being leased quickly.

Reservations have been accepted for 95 percent of the 268 rental apartment units. Final selections and advance deposits have been made for 60 of the units. The first residents are expected to move in January, 1990.

Residents will pay a 90 percent refundable entrance fee for the one-bedroom units ranging from \$47,000 to \$116,000. Monthly service fees range from \$675 to \$1,075 for one person, plus \$300 per month for an additional resident. (Prices are provided by the builder and are subject to change without notice.)

Bethlehem Woods is a joint venture of the Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange and the Catholic Charities Housing Development Corp.

The 42-acre wooded site will contain two six-story buildings containing 134 apartments each.

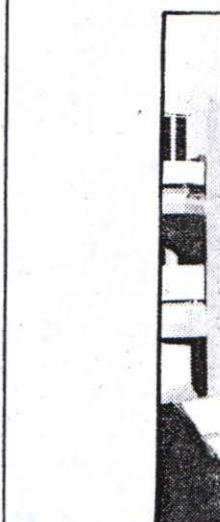
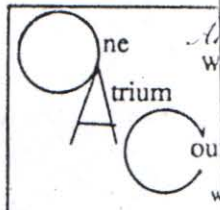
Other development highlights will include a licensed intermediate care health center and a commons building, which will be connected to the residential buildings by covered walkways and serve as the hub for activities and services.

The commons building will have dining rooms, a convenience store, a beauty and barber shop, library, preventive health care offices and game, exercise, and arts and crafts rooms.

The emphasis of the center will be on health, independence and security. Bethlehem Woods will offer continuing care through preventive health care programs, exercise and wellness programs; and, if needed, access to the on-site licensed, intermediate care facility.

The financing of Bethlehem Woods is provided by Cook County through Adjusted Revenue Demand Bonds and Fixed Revenue Bonds and Catholic Charities Housing.

For leasing information, call 352-5770.



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And the success story continues at the new North Shore's most popular community. A tour of our dramatic models reveals single family home privacy



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