

Sun City Taxpayers Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 24 Sun City, Arizona 85351

Telephone 977-8071

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

C O N S T I T U T I O N

PREAMBLE

The Sun City Taxpayers Association, Incorporated, organized as a non-profit corporation in compliance with the laws of the State of Arizona, is authorized to operate pursuant to a Certificate of Incorporation issued by the Arizona Corporation Commission dated the 11th Day of August, 1970. This Constitution and the By-laws which are a part hereof, are in compliance with the Articles of Incorporation filed with the Certificate of Incorporation.

ARTICLE I. NAME

Section 1. NAME: The name of this association shall be: SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. COMMUNITY INTERESTS: To work in behalf of the community interests of the residents and property owners of Sun City, Arizona.

Section 2. TAXES: To monitor the actions and activities of all taxing authorities affecting residents and property owners of Sun City and to use every effort and means to see that all resulting taxes are essential, fair and equitable.

Section 3. COMMUNITY SERVICES: To endeavor to acquire for Sun City such community services as may be required for health, safety, protection, comfort and welfare of all residents and property owners, and to make every effort to assure that these services shall be adequate and their costs be fair and reasonable.

Section 4. PUBLIC UTILITIES: To study the basis of all public utilities' services and costs and to endeavor to assure that these services and costs are fair and reasonable. The association shall consider trash collection and sanitary sewerage as public utilities.

Section 5. PUBLIC RELATIONS: To keep the members and the public informed of the activities of the association by use of general meetings, newsletters, press releases, speakers' bureau and any other suitable means.

Section 6. CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS: To work and serve with other civic organizations when mutually agreeable in the interest of good government and community welfare.

Section 7. OTHER OBJECTIVES: In addition to the purposes and objectives listed herein, those items of "business proposed to be transacted" in Article III of the Articles of Incorporation shall govern.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. REGULAR MEMBERS: Any adult resident or residential property owner of Sun City who holds a current membership in the Recreation Centers of Sun City is eligible for regular membership.

Section 2. COMMERCIAL MEMBERSHIP: Any business, partnership, corporation or association doing business in Sun City and occupying commercial property therein is eligible for commercial membership; except that no business engaged in a service as a public utility may qualify. Each business shall designate one employee who shall represent the business with the association.

ARTICLE IV. MANAGEMENT

Section 1. POWERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The business of the association shall be conducted by a Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the Board) and such officers as the said Board may appoint or elect.

Section 2. BOARD MEMBERSHIP: The Board shall consist of fifteen (15) Directors to be elected by and from the general membership and shall serve for two (2) years on a staggered basis as provided in the by-laws.

Section 3. BOARD MEETINGS: Board meetings shall be held on regularly scheduled dates each month. Meetings shall be open to any association member.

Section 4. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS: An annual membership meeting shall be held during the first two (2) calendar weeks in January, at which time the incumbent president shall make an annual report to the members and the newly elected Directors and Officers shall be installed. General membership meetings shall be held during the first two (2) weeks of March, June and October. Additional general membership meetings may be held at the call of the President, the Board or upon petition to the Board of any five (5) members.

Section 5. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: Directors shall be elected by the members by mail by the use of ballots as provided in the by-laws.

Section 6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The Board shall elect the following officers from among its members: President, 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President; and a Secretary and a Treasurer, who need not be a Director, in which case the Secretary and the Treasurer do not have a vote at Board meetings.

Section 7. LIMITED CANDIDATES: No person holding a public office in the state, county or local government, or receiving remuneration for services from any Del Webb corporation shall be eligible for election or appointment to any office.

Section 8. LIMITED TERMS: No officer shall serve more than one (1) consecutive term in the same office, except that the terms of the Secretary and the Treasurer are not so limited.

Section 9. ADDED MANAGEMENT DUTIES: Additional management duties and responsibilities shall be in conformity with the Articles of Incorporation.

ARTICLE V. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

Section 1. AMENDMENTS: Proposed amendments to the Constitution and the By-laws may be submitted by any five (5) members, in which case the proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Board in writing.

Section 2. APPROVAL BY MEMBERS: With or without Board approval, the proposed amendment (s) shall be submitted to a vote of the members at a regular general membership meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, by giving not less than fourteen (14) days written notice to the members of the proposed amendments. Approval shall require an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3rds) of the printed ballots cast at such meeting. Ballots shall be distributed only to those members displaying a current membership card. At the discretion of the Board, approval of amendment (s) may be by mailed ballots, in which case approval shall require an affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3rds) of the ballots returned during the thirty (30) day period following the date of mailing to the members, as certified by the Secretary.

ARTICLE VI. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section 1. REMOVAL FOR CAUSE: Any officer or director may be removed from office for cause by a two thirds (2/3rds) vote of members present at any general membership meeting.

Section 2. PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL: Procedures for submitting a proposal for removal of an officer or director shall be identical to those governing AMENDMENTS in Section 1. ARTICLE V.

B Y - L A W S

ARTICLE I. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. NUMBER OF DIRECTORS: Of a total of fifteen (15) Directors, eight (8) shall be elected for a term of two (2) years beginning in even-numbered years and seven (7) for a term of two (2) years beginning in odd-numbered years.

Section 2. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: A nominating committee of three (3) or more members shall be appointed by the President. The committee shall place in nomination not less than one (1) more nominee than the number of vacancies to be filled, each nominee having expressed his willingness to serve, if elected. The list of nominees shall be presented to the Board at its October meeting.

Section 3. LIST OF CANDIDATES TO MEMBERS: The Secretary shall transmit a copy of the list of candidates to each member by mail no later than the first week of November, affording an opportunity for added nominations by members. Such additional nominations, if any, shall be made to the Secretary not later than November 15th.

Section 4. BALLOTS TO MEMBERS: The Secretary shall mail not later than December 1st, a ballot approved by the Board to each member in good standing for the election of Directors, with a deadline of December 15th for the return of ballots to the Secretary.

Section 5. ELECTION TELLERS: The President shall appoint three (3) Directors as Election Tellers. The Secretary shall deliver to the tellers all member ballots not later than December 17th. The tellers shall certify the number of votes cast for each candidate to the President not later than December 20th, declaring those receiving the highest number of votes elected to the Board.

Section 6. BOARD VACANCIES: Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by appointment of an association member by the President, with the advice and consent of the Board.

Section 7. VACATING OFFICE OF DIRECTOR: A Director may be removed from office by a two thirds (2/3rds) vote of the Directors present at any Board meeting, by reason of a Director's absence from two (2) consecutive meetings without good and sufficient reason in the judgment of the President.

ARTICLE II. DUTIES OF THE BOARD

Section 1. POWERS OF THE BOARD: The business of the Association shall be conducted by the Board and the Officers acting in their respective capacities as described herein.

Section 2. BOARD MEETINGS: Meetings of the Board shall be held at such places as may be available and suitable and at such times as may be suitable to the Directors.

Section 3. ANNUAL DUES: The Board shall determine the amount of annual dues to be paid by Regular and Commercial members.

Section 4. AUDITS: The Board shall order an audit of the Treasurer's records and accounts annually, and whenever there is a change in the incumbency of the office of Treasurer, by an audit committee of at least two (2) persons not limited to members, to be appointed by the President. The committee shall make its report to the Board.

Section 5. VOTE BY ABSENT DIRECTOR: A Director who cannot attend the Board meeting for election of officers may cast his ballot with the Secretary by mail prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. PRESIDENT: The President is the chief executive of the corporation. He and the Board shall conduct the business of the association; he shall preside at all meetings; appoint all committee chairmen; and administer all affairs relating to the objectives and activities of the association.

Section 2. 1st VICE PRESIDENT: In the absence of the President, the 1st Vice President shall have the powers and duties of the President; he shall assist the President in the performance of his executive duties; and shall perform other duties assigned to him by the President.

Section 3. 2nd VICE PRESIDENT: In the absence of both the President and 1st Vice President, the 2nd Vice President shall have the powers and duties of the President and the 1st Vice President.

Section 4. SECRETARY: The Secretary shall enter into the records of the association all proceedings and resolutions of Board and General Membership meetings; he shall conduct all correspondence as directed by the President; he shall maintain all files of record, except the roster or file of members; he shall notify Directors of the time and place of all Board meetings; he shall notify all members of the time and place of all General Membership meetings; and perform such other duties as requested by the President.

Section 5. TREASURER: The Treasurer shall receive and account for all association funds; he shall deposit all revenues to association accounts and deposit surplus funds in interest bearing accounts in bank(s) designated by the Board; he shall make disbursements by direction of the Board; disbursements of fifteen (\$15) dollars or more shall be made by bank check; he may maintain a petty cash account of twenty-five (\$25) dollars for disbursements of less than fifteen (\$15) dollars; he shall collect annual dues from members as determined by the Board; he shall maintain a register (roster) or file of members; and he shall report the financial condition of the association at all regular Board meetings and all General Membership meetings.

Section 6. STANDING COMMITTEES: The President may appoint Chairmen of standing committees for the following civic purposes and such added committees as he sees fit: Community Services; Incorporation of Sun City; Legislation; Public Education; Public Utilities; Taxes; and Zoning, Land Classification and Use.

Section 7. ASSOCIATION SERVICES: The President may appoint Chairmen of committees to assist the officers with the following services: Constitution & By-laws; Finance; Membership; Publicity & Public Relations; Speakers' Bureau; and such added committees as may be required.

ARTICLE IV. QUORUM

Section 1. GENERAL MEETINGS: Twenty-five (25) members in good standing shall constitute a quorum at all General Membership meetings.

Section 2. BOARD MEETINGS: Five (5) Board members, in addition to the President or acting president shall constitute a quorum at all Board meetings. The President may vote in case of a tie vote.

ARTICLE V. PROCEDURES

Section 1. RULES OF ORDER: All Board and General Membership meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws, and Robert's Rules of Order, revised.

This Constitution & By-laws were approved by the Board of Directors in a regular meeting held on May 10, 1973, at Fairway Center, Sun City, Arizona.

This Constitution & By-laws were approved by a majority vote of those members present at a General Membership meeting held on JUN 28 1973 at Fairway Center, Sun City, Arizona.



THE ACTION GROUP

**S.C.T.A.
"GUARDIAN OF
SUN CITY'S POCKETBOOK"**

**SUN CITY TAXPAYERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

12630 N. 103rd Ave.

SUN CITY, ARIZONA

PHONE - (602) 933-7530

THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

WE ARE THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, FORMED IN SUN CITY IN 1969 AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. THIS GROUP OF DEDICATED CITIZENS, MOTIVATED BY CIVIC PRIDE AND SERVING WITHOUT REMUNERATION, FELT THE NEED FOR AN ORGANIZATION TO PROTECT OUR FELLOW CITIZENS FROM THE INSATIABLE APPETITES OF TAX-HAPPY POLITICIANS AND THE UNENDING RATE-INCREASE REQUESTS, USUALLY UNJUSTIFIED, OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES.

OUR PRIMARY GOAL AT ALL TIMES, IS TO PROTECT THE POCKETBOOKS OF OUR FELLOW CITIZENS, THUS ALLOWING THEM TO CONTINUE TO AFFORD THE LIFE STYLE THAT ORIGINALLY ATTRACTED THEM TO SUN CITY.

THE S.C.T.A. IS SERVED BY AN ELECTED BOARD OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS WHO SERVE FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS - FIVE OR MORE DIRECTORS BEING ELECTED EVERY YEAR. OUR DIRECTORS MEET THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH, EXCLUDING JULY AND AUGUST, AND THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND. WE ATTEMPT TO HAVE SPEAKERS PROMINENT IN POLITICS AND INDUSTRY TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS AT OUR MEETINGS. OUR DIRECTORS ARE REPRESENTED IN MANY DIFFERENT FIELDS OF ENDEAVOR. WE HAVE SEVEN MAJOR PERMANENT STANDING COMMITTEES: UTILITIES, LEGISLATIVE, TAXES, PLANNING, MEMBERSHIP, COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

WE ARE PROUD TO PUBLISH THE FOLLOWING PARTIAL LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. SUCCESSFUL LITIGATION AGAINST THE CITIZENS UTILITY CO. OF STAMFORD, CONN., OWNER OF SUN CITY WATER CO. AND SUN CITY SEWER CO., THUS SAVING SUN CITY RESIDENTS IN EXCESS OF \$1,500,000 ANNUAL WATER AND SEWER BILLS. OUR LEGAL COST IN THIS ACTION EXCEEDED \$65,000.
2. WE COMPELLED THIS UTILITY TO DECREASE EXCESSIVE SERVICING FEES ON ALL FIRE HYDRANTS IN SUN CITY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$18,000 ANNUALLY.
3. PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN ELIMINATING SALES TAXES ON FOOD.
4. WE ANNUALLY ASSIST INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNERS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS AND ALSO HELP THEM FILE PROTESTS , IF NECESSARY.
5. ACTED AS LIAISON IN TRANSFER OF THE VALUABLE SUN BOWL PROPERTY FROM DEL WEBB CO. TO THE RECREATION CENTERS.
6. WE SPEARHEADED THE DRIVE IN 1974 THAT RESULTED IN REDUCTION OF TAXES BY HAVING THEM REMOVED FROM THE PEORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT.
7. IN 1975 WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN HAVING IRRIGATION CHARGES REMOVED FROM SUN CITY PROPERTIES.
8. WE ARE THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN SUN CITY EMPLOYING ATTORNEYS, ACCOUNTANTS AND EXPERT WITNESSES TO TESTIFY AND INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF SUN CITY RESIDENTS BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION, ARIZONA STATE LEGISLATURE AND OTHER GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS.

OUR PRESENT MEMBERSHIP EXCEEDS 19,000 DUES-PAYING MEMBERS AND WE SINCERELY SOLICIT YOUR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OF THIS VERY WORTHY ORGANIZATION. PLEASE APPLY BY MAIL, PHONE, OR COME TO OUR OFFICE LOCATED IN

THE PROFESSIONAL BUILDING
12630 N. 103rd Ave., Sun City, Arizona
Phone: (602) 933-7530

Join the tax assistance brigade at Sun City CAN

By Linda Miskimen

AARP Tax-Aide is a free income tax service and located in your neighborhood. The program partners with Sun City Community Assistance Network and has a year-round presence at Sun City CAN offices, 10195 W Coggins Drive.

AARP Tax-Aide is part of the AARP Foundation and its mission is dedicated to assisting senior citizens, and low- to middle-income taxpayers file their personal income tax returns for free. Every person you meet at a Tax-Aide site is a volunteer who wants to help their neighbors. You can be one of those people who help neighbors with income taxes.

AARP Tax-Aide operates for 2.5 months from Feb. 1 through April 15 and asks volunteers to commit to at least two half days each week. Each volunteer will need to complete IRS sponsored training, which is conducted during the month of January, and pass a certification test. The training is offered at Sun City Community Assistance



Network and will cover most situations likely to be encountered.

The skills sought in volunteers are a willingness to help others, familiarity with computers and a comfort in dealing with numbers. Of course, if you have prior tax experiences, even if it is preparing your own return, that would be even better.

For those interested but are not certain whether they have the necessary skills, AARP Tax-Aide officials would still like to talk about this opportunity. To introduce the program to newcomers, there is an orientation meeting usually scheduled in December.

There are many positions available, including greeters who check clients in, client



Residents pack the Sun City CAN office during the tax season for the annual AARP Tax-Aide assistance program.

facilitators who check clients' paperwork and ensure that all needed paperwork is present, tax counselors who input data into the tax return software and quality reviewers who review the completed return.

Residents interested in this opportunity

or who just want to attend the orientation class can either contact Sun City Community Assistance Network at 623-933-7530 (please leave your name, phone number and email address) or can register at www.aarg.org.



Representatives from EPCOR Water(right rear) stopped by to thank CAN volunteers who were writing water rebate checks to low income Sun City condo residents. Twice each year, about 250 Sun City condo dwellers receive a \$25 check from a program approved by Arizona Corporation Commission, funded by EPCOR and administered by CAN.

Group works solely on donations

By Hugh Duncan
Sun City Community Assistance
Network President

Sun City Community Assistance Network (SC CAN) recently celebrated its second year of independent existence. It was originally part of Sun City Taxpayers Association which was founded in the 1960's. The new organization is a 501(c)3

charity and is governed by a twelve person Board of Directors. Its mission is "to enhance the standard of living in our communities by being advocates and providing no cost services to our residents through the efforts of volunteers and staff"

"The main reason for the change in name and the change in focus was the realization that poverty and need are growing

problems in Sun City", said President Hugh Duncan. "Not everyone realizes that according to the 2010 census, almost 15% of the households in Sun City live on less than \$15,000 a year and 6.5% of Sun City's residents are below the poverty line. 6.5% of Sun City's population is about 2,500 of our neighbors, mainly elderly widows".

Story continues on Page 15

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Sun City CAN is a volunteer organization with two part-time employees. As someone once said "A small organization with a big heart!" All services are free.

State Representative Rick Gray of Sun City is a member of the CAN Board of Directors. He recently said "Sun City CAN is a private organization that connects people with resources. These kind of organizations are crucial."

Sun City CAN exists not only to help citizens of Sun City but to help anyone from the West Valley who needs assistance. "We never ask someone if they are a resident of Sun City before providing help" said Mike Lindquist, Vice President. "And all of our services are free!"

Sun City CAN is perhaps best known for hosting about 70 AARP TaxAide volunteers during tax season. Last year they filed over 4,000 free federal and state income tax returns for grateful residents. These volunteers also helped over 400 low income residents get refunds of up to \$500 on their Maricopa County property taxes.

Sun City CAN provides free office space to a representative from the Maricopa County Tax Assessors office so the residents have a convenient place to get answers to their property tax questions. They can also get help with the widow/widower break and freezing the assessed

property value.

A relatively new CAN program helps low income condo residents get a rebate on the water bill that is paid by the condo association. Now twice each year, checks for about \$26 are mailed out to about 250 condo residents. This creative program was authorized several years ago by the Arizona Corporation Commission, is funded by EPCOR water and is administered by CAN.

Sun City CAN also provides free 30 minute legal consultations with a pro bono attorney on Thursday and Friday mornings from 9:00am to 11:30am. One client recently said "Thank you for getting me set up on the water rebate program and an appointment with the lawyer. He was great!"

Volunteers Jack Leyse and LaRee Graham are on site Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. They are Benefits Counselors and they help low income persons discover benefits they are entitled to but not aware of. A client who was helped by this program said "I appreciate all you do. You are so helpful. You have helped me many times and I am thankful."

Another service to the community that CAN provides is publishing and distributing the "Northwest Valley Resource Book". This is a directory listing services provided and contact information for support organizations in Sun City, Sun City West, Youngtown, Surprise, El Mirage and Peoria. Copies are distributed and

widely used by the support organizations, workers, churches, retirement homes,

Sun City CAN relies solely on donations from community residents and organizations. It does not receive any outside government grants or assistance. "Currently only about 1% of the households in Sun City support us with an annual donation," Duncan said. "We will increase in the future as more and more people become aware of the good work we do."

One recent development that should be noted is the fact that Sun City CAN is now an approved charity for the Arizona Department of Revenue's "Donations to Qualifying Charitable Organizations" income tax credit (form 3039) and the Working Poor Tax credit. This means that people who will owe Arizona state income tax can get a dollar for dollar tax credit for their donations to CAN. "I know" said Duncan "it sounds too good to be true. But it is true! The credit is \$200 for single persons and \$400 for couples. This credit can be claimed in addition to the school tax credit." More information on this tax credit is found on page 19.

The Sun City CAN offices are located at Sun Valley Lodge at 10195 W. Coggin Road. Office hours are 8:00am to noon, Monday through Friday. However, the county representative is available 8:00am to 5:00pm those days. For more information, call 627-7530, e-mail Admin@SunCityCAN.org or visit suncitycan.org.



Submitted photo

The Sun City Community Assistance Network (formally the Sun City Taxpayers Association) Board of Directors, including from left, Marv Worthen, Karen Wellert, Bill Fleming and Hugh Duncan, hit the streets heralding the new name of the 49-year-old organization.

By any other name, services remain

Sun City CAN more accurately reflects agency's purpose

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

It will not be a place to drop off cans, but the Sun City Taxpayers Association is now officially called Sun City CAN.

When it first began circulating the new name, Sun City Community Assistance Network officials fielded concerns about people misinterpreting their sign and bringing canned food or recycled cans to the office at 10195 W. Coggins Drive. In fact, the nonprofit agency will continue to offer the same services it has for years — which does not include accepting cans.

"Even when we tried to get cans (food donations), we didn't get much, if any," said Hugh Duncan, Sun City CAN board chairman.

He added the board believes the name

change will help the organization move away from the perception it is a solely tax advocacy group.

"The old name implies some sense of self-serving interest," he said. "That is far from the case."

Marv Worthen, Sun City CAN executive director, said the organization will provide all the same services and include the same staff and board members as before the name change. In addition to Mr. Duncan, Mike Lindquist will remain in the vice chairman position.

"We will continue to do all the same things, including tax assistance and intervening with utilities," Mr. Worthen said.

While it offers a wider variety of services, SC CAN's major programs include benefits assistance, AARP Tax Aide, legal assistance and housing a satellite office for the Maricopa County Assessor, Mr. Worthen explained. Other services include financial consultations, wa-

CAN

Continued From Page 2

ter rebate program coordinator, Medicare/Medicaid assistance and serving as a starting place for other help. SC CAN, an all-volunteer organization funded through donations, also publishes an annual community resource guide.

There is no charge for any services provided by SC CAN. While it focuses on Sun City residents, the agency will help anyone who comes in, regardless of where they live, according to Jan Hughes, SC CAN outreach director.

The original purpose of SCTA, founded in 1968 and incorporated in 1970, was to help protect residents from unwarranted tax and

utility rate increases.

"Our low Sun City property taxes today are a tribute to the efforts of SCTA volunteers over the years," Mr. Worthen said.

However, the organization is now directing more attention and resources toward improving quality of life for low-income residents. But it continues to stand ready to advocate for residents regarding tax and utility increases, according to Mr. Worthen.

He noted Sun City Festival residents are using SC CAN as a model to create their own organization to advocate for its residents.

"They have more to deal with than us — a city and two school districts — but they are facing similar things," Mr. Worthen said. "We have been working with them to help them better inform their people."

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

SCTA

FROM A1

Worthen said he has been meeting with groups around Sun City for a long time, and he often hears a familiar refrain.

"They say, 'we are the best-kept secret in Sun City,'" Worthen said. "I always hear that. And what we're trying to do is let people know there are a lot of great things going on in Sun City so these groups don't have to remain a secret. This is our attempt to acquaint the people of Sun City with all the services available to them."

Another problem, said Second Vice President Willem Tijmann, is confusion over just exactly who does what.

"A lot of times, there are so many groups out there that even if you do know about them, you still don't know where to start," Tijmann said. "There is confusion over which groups offer which services. We get calls from people all the time who are confused even

about what we do."

In an effort to make sure the information shared at the annual meeting will stick, Worthen said a notebook is being prepared for everyone who comes.

"You will go home with a notebook containing information from every group there," Worthen said. "Contact info, what they do, what kind of help they need, like volunteers or food donations, whatever it may be. That information will go home with you."

While not everyone in attendance will need all of the services being discussed, they might know someone who does.

"Those are the people we're trying to reach," Worthen said. "The people who show up may not need help, but I'll bet just about everyone knows someone who does. That's what we're really hoping for, is to spread the message beyond the people who come to the meeting."

The meeting will be at 12:30 p.m. Jan. 22 at the Sun City Unity Church and will feature District 9 Representative Deb-

bie Lesko and Sun City Visitors Center Executive Director Paul Herrmann. Local bluegrass band The Monday Group will be on hand to provide the entertainment.

Worthen said he is excited about the new officers and the discussions they are having about the future.

"These planning sessions are ongoing," Worthen said. "We're saying, 'here is where we are, here is where we want to be, and this is what we need to do to get there.' I'm just so proud to have people here who are thinking about the future and what steps we need to take moving forward."

The officers for the SCTA board of directors are Hugh Duncan, president; Mike Lindquist, first vice president; Tijmann, second vice president; Bev Morgan, secretary; and Viretta Hess, treasurer. Members of the board serve two-year terms.

For information, call the SCTA at 623-933-7530.

Jeff Dempsey may be reached at 623-876-2531 or jdempsey@yourwestvalley.com.

SCTA shines light on community services

JEFF DEMPSEY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Marv Worthen and the newly sworn-in officers of the Sun City Taxpayers Association met Monday morning to discuss the SCTA's annual meeting next week, with Worthen half-jokingly worrying about attendance.

"I think that you always concern yourself about with something like this, is what if you hold a big meeting and nobody shows up?" the former president said.

Those who do show up to the meeting, Worthen said, will have plenty to do. The SCTA has been stressing the importance of shining a light on available services over the past year in particular, and next week's meeting will be no different.

"What we're excited about is the organizations that will be there with us," Worthen said. "We're giving them a chance to show the people what they do for the residents."

SEE SCTA, A5

Taxpayers association provides essential services

By Marv Worthen

The Sun City Taxpayers Association was recently attacked in a guest commentary submitted by Sun City resident Anne Randall Stewart ("Quorum needed to overturn RCSC board decisions," Sun City Independent, Sept. 23, 2009) for not speaking out against the \$500 increase in the preservation and improvement fee.

SCTA was then accused of trying to keep the poor out of Sun City. The purpose and mission of SCTA is to help people who now reside in Sun City to remain and enjoy their home as much as possible and as long as possible. No one has ever been turned away from our services because they were not SCTA members.

The Sun City Taxpayers Association and Community Action Council had been asked to present an update of our current activities and future plans to the RCSC board and membership Aug. 27. This we did in a formal presentation and passed out an informational sheet for future reference for those interested. The guest commentary writer, using selected quotes from the informational sheet, belittled one of the very effective national programs accessed by both SCTA/CAN and Banner Olive Branch Senior Center. This program, Benefits Check Up, is used to determine eligibility for seniors and disabled for more than 70 county, state, private and national programs.

These two groups are by far the largest producers of the Benefits Check Up Program in Arizona. In the past two years these groups have secured \$4,257,794 of help for the 864 area residents who qualified. This is an average of \$4,928 in annual benefits per screening. These annual benefits are recurring unless there is a sudden increase in their income. In January 2009, SCTA hired an outreach coordinator to make this program more visible and available to those in need. No one was turned away from this service.

GUEST Commentary

Marv Worthen



Every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the county assessor representative is housed in the SCTA office, at no expense to the assessor's office. This office is there to aide our area residents with up-to-date information and possible reduction of their real estate taxes. A very large amount of dollars have been saved by our clients using this service. No one has been turned away from this service.

From January through April each year SCTA houses AARP Taxaide for the benefit of more than 2,500 of our residents. From April 15 a service has been presented weekly to those with unfiled taxes or with tax problems. This is the only service of this kind in Arizona. In the past two years AARP Taxaide has processed 3,300 electronically filed returns securing \$1,505,164 in refunds. This does not include our help in filing and securing the stimulus package or for Arizona property tax credit. SCTA and AARP Taxaide have been cited as an exemplary program in combining tax service, Benefits Check Ups and the Assessor's office in a complete program of assistance. No one has been turned away from this service.

During the last two years SCTA has presented before the Arizona Corporation Commission, representing Sun City residents, requesting refusal of rate increases by our water and electrical utility suppliers. In these efforts we have often been the only community organization in attendance. SCTA is respected by the ACC, and will continue its

effort in these areas.

Over the past year we have attended the Sun City Fire District's board of directors monthly meetings. During this entire time we have indicated the 10 percent annual increase of fire taxes was no longer acceptable. This was accomplished for this tax year, with the cooperation of the firefighters union in not requesting a raise in salary. All of this was done through cooperation between the different groups.

The SCTA board is aware that there is a definite difference in the need for additional money requested by various groups. When the request is from an outside group for an increase in rates or salaries that are of no benefit to our residents, we will continue to present against it. When we decide that an increase will benefit our residents, we will not act against it just because it is a rate increase.

Money for needed improvements and large repairs in Sun City can only come from the residents of Sun City. We do not have an ability to assess taxes based on worth of property or income. This money for improvements may come from a stated general assessment or the preservation and improvement fund. This PIF should be paid by the purchaser of the property, not the seller. The willingness or felt need to pay the PIF by the seller is that person's prerogative. The purchaser is the one who will enjoy the future improvements to be made in our com-

munity.

The article was correct indicating that we did retire the bulldog logo. SCTA decided the new three-joined circles seemed to better represent our desire to serve the senior residents of our community. If the bulldog were up for adoption, we hope it finds a positive home.

SCTA's mission statement indicates we will attempt to help our residents remain and enjoy living in their own homes as long as possible, both financially and health wise. The SCTA board did determine that by adding \$500 to the PIF, no one could or would be forced from their home.

Your contributions that keep the Sun City Taxpayers Association functioning are indeed an accomplishment. Our entire income is from membership fees and donations. If our residents determine that SCTA is not a necessary and functioning organization, it is easy to get rid of it — just don't renew your membership or make your complimentary donation.

Yes, we have changed. Our community has changed. Gone are the days when only fighting against everything is considered as moving forward. We hope everyone becomes aware of the programs at SCTA and SCTA/CAN and you all watch our progress. With your help our efforts to serve others we will only grow and improve.

Editor's Note: Mr. Worthen is Sun City Taxpayers Association president.

All about community



Dialogue among local groups stimulates understanding

JEFF DEMPSEY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Last week, Sun City Taxpayers Association President Marv Worthen laid out a few modest goals for an upcoming community meeting: Get local groups together, get them to talk about helping each other and get them interested in continuing the dialogue.

After three hours Thursday, Worthen was smiling. He could check all those goals off his list.

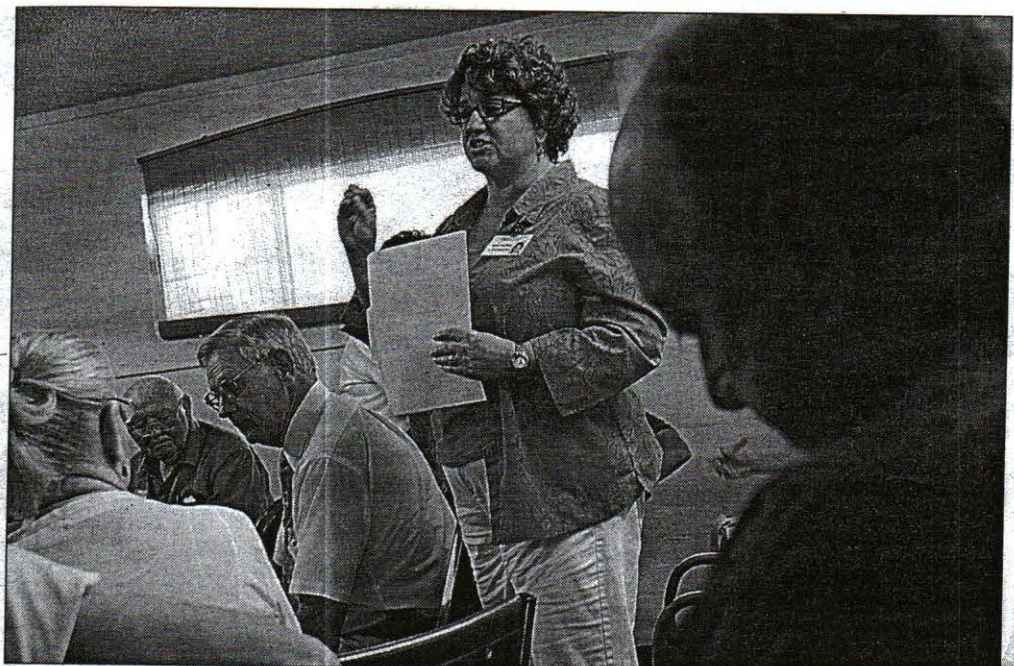
"I had high hopes coming into this, and it went even better than I thought," Worthen said. "What means the most to me coming out of this is just how many people care, and how many are eager to make things better. If we can keep this going, I think we'll have something really special on our hands."

SEE COMMUNITY, A5

ASHLEY LOWERY/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Getting together at a networking meeting arranged by the Sun City Taxpayers Association are from left, Ivy Shirley, executive director of Banner Olive Branch Senior Center; Marion Widger of We Are Family International Inc., which operates a thrift store in Sun City; and Jesse Ramirez, director of Valley View Community Food Bank. Dozens attended the event Thursday in the SCTA office on Coggins Drive in Sun City.

Susan Hawfield, standing, of the Foundation for Senior Living, speaks during a meeting arranged by Sun City Taxpayers Association to bring together dozens of area groups for networking to better serve the community. The meeting was Thursday at the SCTA office on Coggins Drive in Sun City.



ASHLEY LOWERY/DAILY NEWS-SUN

COMMUNITY

FROM A1

Judging by the sentiments of the dozens in attendance, Worthen should have no concerns about the community meetings going away. No fewer than three of the attendees said they would be interested in hosting a future meeting, and many more than that said they would attend.

"We've realized over the past few years that through sharing and networking, we can accomplish a great deal more," said David Japhet, commander of the Sun City Posse. "We're often the first on the scene, and so many times we at the Posse are the first to know when someone needs assistance. It is vital that we keep the lines of communication open with all of you."

The plan for the meeting was simple: Invitations were sent to more than 40 groups in the Sun Cities area, both non-profit and for-profit. They were asked to bring 40 copies of a one-page sheet explaining who they are and what they do — one copy for the SCTA and one each for all the other groups.

Afterward, a thick manila folder of papers and handouts was given to everyone who came.

Worthen said part of his plan was to encourage groups to help each other out and, during the course of the meeting, that happened several times.

Jesse Ramirez of the Valley View Community Food Bank described his operation, saying he serves food to 330 people ev-

ery day, including food deliveries.

"Jesse, if you are ever in a pinch at the last minute, just let us know. We have plenty of volunteers we can send your way," said Jane Bruzzese, intake program director at Interfaith Community Care. "If you're in a crunch you can call us."

And the offers did not stop there. John Weekley, who works at Ken Meade Realty's Greenwood office, said his company is happy to be of assistance.

"I would just like to let everyone know that if you ever need volunteers, we've got plenty," Weekley said. "There are 75 Realtors in our office alone, and we're glad to help any time we can. Even on short notice, we'll try to get some people out."

Several exchanges like those took place. And the attendees seemed just as puzzled as Worthen about why nobody had thought to do this before.

"I see the energy and the synergy in this room, and I think the potential for what we can accomplish is exponential," said Rick Gray, a board member for the Sun City Home Owners Association. "We can take advantage of each other's strengths, and we can build on this."

Youngtown Mayor Mike LeVault expressed thanks to Worthen and the SCTA staff for putting the meeting together, saying tough times necessitate greater efforts on everyone's part.

"Times are tough right now, there's no doubt, and this type of meeting is exactly what we need to sort of amplify what re-

sources we do have," LeVault said. "We're creating a means to look out for one another. I think this is a great service to the community."

Larry Woods, president of the Property Owners and Residents Association Board of Directors, said he is disappointed in how lacking the services are in Sun City West.

"I wish I could say we do more, but the truth is, we do very few of the things you all are talking about in Sun City West," Woods said. "We really need for a lot of your organizations to start moving over to Sun City West, too. Let's get something going. If you want to come to Sun City West, if in fact you feel an obligation to provide services to Sun City West, please contact me, and we'll get it started."

Woods added that he will make PORA's weekly e-newsletter available to every group at the meeting.

"We send that out to 6,300 people, so if you have something you want to advertise, we're there for you," he said.

After it was all over, Worthen said he felt a sense of hope.

"These people all came because they wanted to," Worthen said. "They got nothing out of this, no money, no compensation. They came because they see there is a need in the community for help and they want to address it. That's really inspiring."

For information, contact the Sun City Taxpayers Association at 623-933-7530 or visit www.suncitytaxpayers.org.

Jeff Dempsey may be reached at 623-876-2531 or jdempsey@yourwestvalley.com.

SCTA pushes unity fete

PATRICK ROLAND
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Taxpayer's Association wants the leaders of Sun City's other major organizations to get on board with them.

To promote community unity, the group will have a luncheon 11:30 a.m., Friday at the New China Chinese Restaurant, 10801 N.W. Grand Ave., to talk about the SCTA Community Action Network, Medicare training opportunities, partnerships with SCTA CAN and the Area Agency on Aging and the Medicare bus visit scheduled for Nov. 15.

SCTA board members have invited representatives from the Maricopa County Supervisors, the Sun City Homeowners Association, the Recreation Centers of Sun City and Sun City West, Sun Health Foundation, Sun City Homeowner's Association, Interfaith and several other local organizations as a way to network and discuss senior issues.

"This is our first attempt to pull all the groups together," said SCTA board member Marv Worthen. "We think that by doing a coordinated effort we can help more people."

Worthen said Attorney General Terry Goodard will be at the luncheon

See UNITY, A5

UNITY: SCTA leads pack

FROM A1

to talk about scams and other things causing senior problems.

"This is meant to be very inclusive," said SCTA President Bruce MacDonald. "It's good to sit down and break bread with someone. It's very cordial."

The luncheon kicks off a month packed with informational opportunities for seniors being offered by SCTA CAN, including the Medicare bus event, 1 p.m., Nov. 15, at the Sundial Recreation Center. The bus visit, which will help seniors pick their 2008 benefits, kicks off Medicare's fall annual enrollment which runs through Dec. 31.

Experts on site will be

able to help eligible people with Medicare learn about \$3,600 that is available to help pay for their drug coverage.

Benefits assistance training will be available from the Area Agency on Aging Nov. 13 and Nov. 20 in the First Presbyterian Church, 12225 N. 103rd Ave.

The training is sponsored by SCTA CAN as part of its "Living Longer on Less" program and is available to anyone in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown.

For information on any of the aforementioned events or to RSVP, call 623-933-7530.

Patrick Roland can be reached at 623-876-2522 or proland@yourwestvalley.com.

SCTA sets up senior financial networks

PATRICK ROLAND
DAILY NEWS-SUN

If the Sun City Taxpayer's Association lived by a motto, it would be that no senior should be left behind when it comes to financial health.

With that in mind, officials from SCTA brought together several community leaders for a luncheon Friday geared toward networking and working together for the common goal of senior financial well being.

"We all can't do it without each other," said Tracy Spoon, SCTA executive director. "Where we begin and end, you begin and end. We don't want to leave any seniors behind. We are all watching out."

The luncheon brought leaders from organizations including the Recreation Centers of Sun City, the Sun City Homeowner's Association, Interfaith Community Care, the Valley View Community Food Bank, the Veteran's Administration, the Catholic Outreach Center and the Maricopa County Assessor's Office.

See SCTA, A5

SCTA: Many seniors in need of aid

From A1

The common theme was that many seniors in the Sun Cities and Youngtown are worse off financially than most suspect.

"I don't think people realize how many poor, poor people there are in Sun City," said Jack Kiser of SCTA. "We run in to hundreds of people who don't even have to file income taxes because their income is that low."

"When we started giving out to the community it spread like wildfire," said Jesse Ramirez, who runs Youngtown's Valley View Community Food Bank. "People may have their condos paid but they don't have food in their cupboards. It's really important we get together to do this and see some results."

Part of the reason the luncheon was called was to get the community on board for the Medicare bus scheduled to visit Sundial Recreation Center 1 p.m., Nov. 15. Seniors will be able to sign up for Medicare plans without the bother of numerous insurance companies there to pressure them, Spoon said. Medicare open enrollment for 2008 goes from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31.

SCTA will also offer benefits assistance training with assistance from the Area Agency on Aging at 8:30 a.m. Nov. 13 and 20.

Financial well-being can change dramatically due to death or illness.

"There are so many people who come in to SCTA who have outlived their retirement," said Jacquie Varner, of the Maricopa County Assessor's Office. "Some have been used to two incomes and their spouse is sick or has died and their world is completely different. It even puts people who have saved for their retirement in a bad position."

The hope is that people at the meeting will spread the word about what other organizations do.

"It is a great privilege and honor to serve seniors," said Gerald Dolezal of SCTA. "We need you. Every single person here is dedicated and that is what it takes."

SCTA expands social services

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Seniors have so eagerly embraced the social services offered by the Sun City Taxpayers Association that the organization is compounding its efforts with a new network of resources.

The program has been dubbed "SCTA CAN" — the Sun City Taxpayers Association Community Action Network.

"We're on one track at the SCTA and that is serving the senior citizens of this community," said Gerald Dolezal, SCTA president. "Our door is always open."

"This is so needed, we're overwhelmed here," said Tracy Spoon, executive secretary.

Last week, the SCTA was approved by the Arizona Corporation Commission to develop SCTA CAN as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) division of its organization. The nonprofit status enables the new program to offer tax-deductions to financial donors.

The network has already attracted some key partnerships including the Maricopa County Assessor's Office, AARP Tax Aide, BenefitsCheckUp through the Governor's Office on Aging, the Area Agency on Aging and the National Council on Aging.

With SCTA CAN, the organization can continue to utilize those partnerships while expanding to include more, Dolezal said.

And expansion is critical, Spoon said.

Nearly 14,600 members and hundreds of nonmembers take advantage of resources through the SCTA office, like personal appointments with Jacque Varner, deputy county assessor, to discuss property tax issues, or for help filling out paperwork for Medicare, benefits programs and other senior-specific resources.

From June through August, 491 people interfaced with the county assessor at the SCTA offices, 662 came in to sign petitions on a property tax issue, 150 took advantage of services in the SCTA's "Living Longer on Less" program and there were 52 screenings for BenefitsCheckUp. BenefitsCheckUp is a tool that helps seniors find the benefits they are qualified for.

In many cases, Spoon said, those who visit the SCTA office for help leave with more money coming their way and less leaving their wallet.

Over the past two years, the SCTA has conducted a survey of about 800 of its members, asking if they wanted more social services offered through the organization. The overwhelming response, was "yes," she said.

"We do here what's not offered anywhere else," Spoon said. "We're getting referrals now from other organizations."

See SCTA, A5

SCTA: Aid expands

From A1

The work is becoming so involved that SCTA CAN needs an experienced social worker to handle cases in the office, Spoon said.

"Our goal for (SCTA CAN) is to offer the same social services that cities offer to their residents," she said, adding that the network is not limited to Sun Citians, but to all area seniors.

The primary division of SCTA will continue to operate as a 501(c)(4), meaning donations are not tax deductible. The SCTA also is continuing its original mission — "to protect Sun City's pocketbook, lifestyle and peace of mind without prejudices or political bias, while promising to

maintain the integrity of Sun City, remain independent and to pursue issues based on merit, benefit, fairness, fact and truth."

Leaders of the organization act as intervenors in the APS rate hearings this year, representing the resident's interests in keeping rates as low as possible, Dolezal said. The SCTA will continue to act as community advocates in issues involving utilities, legislation, property tax and senior benefits.

For information on becoming a member of the SCTA, call 933-7530 or visit the offices at 12630 N. 103rd Ave., Suite 144, Sun City.

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

SCTA: SCTA office adds county tax program to site

From A1

"The cooperation with the taxpayers association has been phenomenal," said Marv Worthen, Tax-Aide district coordinator. "I can't believe their openness and willingness to make this program work. They've opened their whole facility to this."

The county assessor's office already has office hours in the SCTA office, which has been a success, said Tracy Spoon, SCTA executive secretary. She expects the Tax-Aide program to be equally popular.

"Now we'll all be in one spot," she said.

Tax Aide's next step in gearing up for tax season is to recruit enough volunteers to keep the program alive. Volunteers should be computer literate, but are not required to have any previous experience in tax preparation.

Volunteers will undergo training and testing, and must commit to work a minimum of four hours per week.

"It gives you a good feeling of being able to help someone else," said Worthen, a Tax-Aide volunteer of three years. "We know that many of these people would go to a private tax group and pay a lot of money, and most people don't have it."

"I do it because I feel like I need to give back," said Joann Ammerman of Sun City, Tax-Aide coordinator of the SCTA site and 12-year volunteer. "It's sharing of our knowledge."

New and returning Tax-Aide volunteers are urged to attend an orientation meeting at 10 a.m. Nov. 16 in the SCTA office, 12630 N. 103rd Ave., Ste 144. Training materials will be distributed. Volunteers will be accepted until Jan. 4, when training begins.

The schedule of available Tax-Aide appointment times will be announced as

IF YOU GO

- **WHAT:** Orientation for prospective and returning Tax-Aide volunteers. Open to the public.
- **WHEN:** 10 a.m. Nov. 16.
- **WHERE:** Sun City Taxpayers Association office, 12630 N. 103rd Ave., Ste. 144, Sun City.
- **INFO:** 933-7530.

tax season nears. Tentatively, the SCTA office will take appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Other Northwest Valley Tax-Aide locations will be announced in January. Taxpayers should bring with them copies of last year's returns, plus all supporting documents showing income (W-2s, 1099s, etc.).

For information about Tax-Aide or about becoming a member of SCTA, call 933-7530 or visit the offices.

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

SCTA gives home to Tax-Aide

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Taxpayers Association came to the rescue of AARP Tax-Aide and to the thousands of taxpayers who rely on the program by becoming the new hub for the free tax preparation.

Tax-Aide is a volunteer group that assists low- and moderate-income taxpayers with their federal and Arizona returns, with special attention given to those age 60 and older. Tax-Aide volunteer counselors offer individualized service on personal income tax filings, enroll qualified people in exemption programs and answer any tax, exemption or tax-credit questions.

This free program will run from February through April 14, by appointment only at the SCTA office, on 103rd Avenue, just south of Coggins Drive.

In previous years, the Sun City Tax-Aide program was in Fairway Recreation Center. However this year, Fairway closed its doors as a Tax-Aide site, forcing AARP to look elsewhere. Cheryl Johnson, Recreation Centers of Sun City Club Office director, cited a lack of available space at any of the seven recreation centers for turning down the program this year.

After scouting the community for other meeting locations, Johnson said she was thrilled to learn that the SCTA offered its space.

Tax-Aide will set up shop in the SCTA office in January and will be the only provider of this service in Sun City.

Tax-Aide coordinators and SCTA board members agreed — the partnership is an ideal marriage. The SCTA exists to serve the taxpayers, and Tax-Aide fits right in with the organization's mission, said SCTA President Gerald Dolezal.

"It will create an inflow into our office, and it would help our citizens. So it will not only benefit them, but us as well. It'll be great," Dolezal said.

See AIDE, A5

Taxpayers mark 35th anniversary

By Geno Lawrenzi
Independent Newspapers

Sun City Taxpayers Association marked its 35th year of operation by inviting Kevin McCarthy, director of the Arizona Tax Research Association, and Arizona Secretary of State Jan Brewer to speak to members at their annual meeting Jan. 29.

Mr. McCarthy, who heads the non-profit independent legislative and tax review organization, talked about the climbing deficit in the state.

He said he was concerned that even with a projected 14 percent increase in annual revenues, the cost of state

government far exceeds its annual income, causing an increase in the deficit.

He told the association members to keep pressure on their representatives to keep the deficit from getting any larger.

Ms. Brewer has been Secretary of State for a year. Her duties include acting as Chief Election Officer. She talked about the importance of voting and said a single vote can make a difference.

She praised the SCTA for their work in getting a membership vote on the conveyance of a substantial asset by the Board of Directors of the Sun City Recreation Centers.

The Recreation Centers

Articles of Incorporation requires a vote of membership before a substantial asset can be conveyed, but she said the organization has not complied with the provision.

Ms. Brewer said she and her staff have been updating election equipment across the state, getting rid of ballot punch card equipment and replacing it with optical scanning equipment.

"There won't be any hanging chads in any Arizona elections," she assured the crowd.

She also reminded those present about the Feb. 4 Presidential Preference Election,

See Tax — Page 3

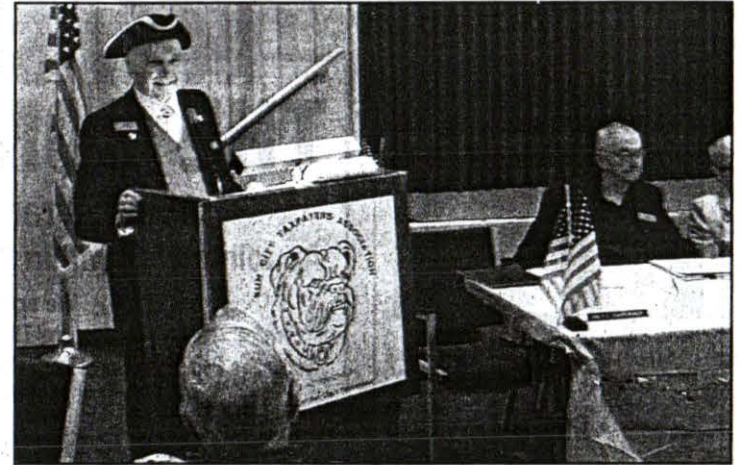


Photo By Geno Lawrenzi/Independent Newspapers

Wearing his patriot's hat, Gerald Dolezal, first vice president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, drew attention at the association's 35th annual meeting Jan. 29. The taxpayers' group heard talks by Kevin McCarthy, director of the Arizona Tax Research Association, and Arizona Secretary of State Jan Brewer.

Tax

Continued From Page 1

which is open to registered Democrats.

She said Arizona will play a key role in the choosing of a Democratic Presidential candidate.

Ray Dare is president and

Gerald Dolezal is first vice president of the taxpayers group.

Mr. Dare praised the group's board, calling them a "good mix with a lot of talent," and said he was especially pleased about their role in helping raise \$46,000 in donations on the water issue, a major concern to Sun City taxpayers.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 8, 2004

ACC chair sparks SCTA

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Arizona Corporation Commission Chairman Marc Spitzer charged members of the Sun City Taxpayers Association with the task of starting a revolution.

"The Sun City Taxpayers Association has been a force of integrity and accountability," Spitzer said in his address at the SCTA board's monthly meeting Tuesday. "This has been a long-standing tradition in this organization."

Spitzer, the afternoon's featured speaker, roused the group of more than a dozen SCTA members with overviews of serious issues affecting retirees and taxpayers in today's often politically and economically corrupt society.

Cell phone companies, Spitzer said, are unregulated by federal or state laws and many are issuing bills that reflect bogus charges.

"We have a state of anarchy here that's unacceptable," Spitzer said. "When they tell you your cell phone bill will be \$29.99, it should be \$29.99."

Although there are some required federal surcharges that can be rightly tacked onto your cell phone bill, many charges are added at the whim of the cell phone company, he said. Unfortunately, neither the ACC nor the Attorney General have jurisdiction in this area, so until legislation changes that, the unbridled cell phone companies will continue to call the shots, Spitzer said.

The ACC recently finished a statewide public hearing tour, during which people could give their testimonies of dealing with cell and conventional phone companies. The data collected during the hearings will be used to strengthen the ACC's case against unethical home and cell phone billing practices, Spitzer said.

In other matters such as Wall Street corruption, storage of natural gas and America's dependency on the Middle East for oil, Spitzer urged the SCTA to act as catalysts for change.

Gerald Dolezal, SCTA first vice president, asked how the SCTA could make a difference. Spitzer told the group to continue to educate the public enough to become intelligent voters, to act as watchdogs over local and national politicians, to elect people of integrity and honor to positions of public trust and to demand ethics from businesses.

The mission of the SCTA is to protect Sun City's pocketbook, lifestyle and peace of mind without prejudices or political bias, while promising to maintain the integrity of Sun City, remain independent and to pursue issues based on merit, benefit, fairness, fact and truth.

For information on becoming a member of the SCTA, call 933-7530 or visit the offices at 12630 N. 103rd Ave., Ste 144, Sun City.

➤ **THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

➤ **FOUNDED 1968**

- The Sun City Taxpayers (SCTA) was founded in 1968, incorporated in 1969, to protect Sun Citizens from unwarranted tax increases and unjustifiable utility rate increases.
- The Sun City Taxpayers Association is the largest Taxpayers Association in the State of Arizona. It is a non-profit 100% volunteer organization made up of a 15 member Board elected for a three-year term. Board members are selected for their knowledge, experience and expertise in order to better serve the needs of Sun City.
- The SCTA represents Sun City in the fields of Taxes, Utilities and Legislation.
- The SCTA Board is in constant contact with our Legislators from the Sun City District, the Arizona Corporation Commission, the Maricopa County Board Supervisor of District 4 and the County Sheriff.
- When needed the SCTA employs attorneys, accountants and expert witnesses to testify and represent the residents of Sun City before the Arizona Corporation Commission, the State Legislature, the Board of Supervisors plus other government agencies.
- The SCTA is affiliated with and supports other local non-profit organizations.

WE WORK WITH THE FIVE (5) BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

- A. GOVERNOR B. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH C. ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH – ACC
D. JUDICIAL BRANCH E. FEDERAL SENATORS/REPRESENTATIVES



“MISSION STATEMENT”

THE MISSION OF THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
IS TO PROTECT SUN CITY'S POCKETBOOK, LIFESTYLE
AND PEACE OF MIND WITHOUT PREJUDICES OR POLITICAL BIAS.

WE PLEDGE TO WORK TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF SUN CITY,
TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT IN OUR THINKING AND
TO PURSUE ISSUES BASED ON MERIT, BENEFIT, FAIRNESS,
FACT AND TRUTH.

**THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



THE ACTION GROUP

**S.C.T.A.
" GUARDIAN OF
SUN CITY'S POCKETBOOK "**

**SUN CITY TAXPAYERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

126~~30~~³⁰N. 103rd, Suite # 144
Sun City, Arizona 85351-3422

PHONE: (623) 933-7530

FAX: (623) 933-0394

E-mail: scta1@juno.com

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday

9-12

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SCTA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- From 1977 to the present, the SCTA has been a presence at the Arizona Corporation Commission intervening in numerous, unwarranted rate requests by the Sun City Water/Sewer Companies (now AZ-AM) saving residents millions. The SCTA prevailed in 1997 in lowering both water and sewer rates, but the Arizona Corporation Commission did approve AZ-AM's Golf Course Pipeline project (February 2003) allowing the water utility to get involved in the operations of our Recreation Centers. The SCTA will continue to be involved in the rate setting activities of the water utility company.
- In 2001, the SCTA filed a lawsuit against the Recreation Centers of Sun City and Sun City Water Company. This case, currently being appealed to the Arizona Court of Appeals, centers around each member/owner's right to vote on issues affecting Sun City residents.
- In 2000, the SCTA campaigned to support Proposition 104, freezing valuations on residences of low-income people 65 or older.
- The SCTA, as a public service to Taxpayers, sponsors a representative from the Tax Assessor's Office from January to May. This representative helps residents interpret Property Tax valuations, file exemptions, appeals and Proposition 104 applications to freeze valuations on residences of low-income people 65 or older.
- In 1998, SCTA defeated both a House and Senate Bill proposing the doubling of Property Taxes in Sun City and the addition of a Secondary Property School Tax, thus constituting a high savings for Sun City.
- In 1996, the SCTA defeated the proposed Maricopa County Charter Government. Votes of Sun City voted over 72% against the approval of the Charter.
- Between 1991-1993, SCTA fought and won reinstatement of the Personal Income Tax exemptions lost when the 1990 AZ tax laws were changed.
- In 1988, SCTA contested the constitutionality of Senate Bill 1261 (Sun City School Tax). It was declared unconstitutional on November 26, 1990 by the Superior Court. (SCTA won and saved Sun City \$83 million dollars. (Renamed: THE LARKIN FUND). SCTA spent \$250,000.
- In 1987, SCTA led the campaign that defeated the Rio Salado Project and the increase in taxes. (Underwriting a \$12,000 media campaign in opposition).
- In 1983, SCTA helped to establish the Residential Utility Consumers Office (RUCO). RUCO acts on behalf of residential utility consumers at the AZ Corporation Commission.
- In 1980, the SCTA led a drive at the local level to remove the sales tax on food. SCTA WON.
- Annually, at the SCTA Membership meetings, local, state and federal government officials are asked to come out to Sun City to speak to our members. Speakers have included Secretary of State Jan Brewer, Maricopa County Assessor Kevin Ross, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Arizona Corporation Commissioners Mark Spitzer, William Mundell and Jim Irvin.

✂ CUT OFF HERE

I/We want to help the Sun City Taxpayers Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Membership
- Donation of
- \$5.00 Single Membership
- \$10.00
- \$10.00 Double Membership
- \$20.00
- Other _____

PLEASE PRINT

PLEASE CHECK: M/M MR. MRS. MISS MS

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

SPOUSE _____

E-MAIL _____

The Sun City Taxpayers Association is a 501(c)4 non-profit organization.
MEMBERSHIP CARD IS NOT NEEDED TO PROVE MEMBERSHIP, BUT IF DESIRED, PLEASE REQUEST

CLOSE UP



Photo by Geno Lawrenzi/Independent Newspapers

Tracy Spoon of the Sun City Taxpayers Association recently spoke to members of the Sun City Union Club. Here she greets Larry Spitz of the Union Club.

TAXPAYERS UNITE

Group assists citizens with taxes, utilities

By Geno Lawrenzi
Independent Newspapers

Tracy Spoon is a woman of many passions and one who wears many hats.

She is executive director of Sun City Taxpayers Association, an organization she joined seven years ago. But she is also a strong believer in unions and the strength that comes when people organize for a cause.

Ms. Spoon spoke recently to more than 100 members of the Union Club, thanking them for their support.

"My husband and I have a lot in common with the Union Club," she told the group which represents labor unions from various parts of the country. "He spent the last 30 years as a machinist with a manufacturing company. For most of the time, our family benefited from his chosen profession with job security, pay raises and increased responsibility.

"But I admit for the past few years it has been more of a struggle. We had built a good life for ourselves and our children...then the bad economy affected manufacturing, people lost their jobs, orders didn't come in, productivity dropped and it was a scary time."

The current problem, she said, is linked to the government's pressure to reduce or eliminate overtime pay for hourly workers. This causes a reduc-

tion in income at a time when the U.S. Labor Department is giving employers advice on how not to pay employees overtime.

"Any new jobs in manufacturing were not being created in the United States," said Ms. Spoon. "They were being created down south in Mexico or in the Far East."

Several weeks ago, her husband's company president announced 90 per cent of the assembly jobs at the company were being cut in America and will be filled at a factory in Mexico.

"I told this to a friend the other day and when I was finished, he said, 'Your husband is a dying breed,'" she said. "I couldn't help but agree with him."

She moved to Sun City following the birth of her son and took a job with Sun City Water Users Association, which her uncle had founded.

"The Sun City Taxpayers Association was organized in 1968 by some of the first residents of Sun City," she pointed out. "They were all concerned, responsible citizens who wanted to protect Sun City from unwarranted tax increases and utility rate increases."

She described SCTA as "a 100 per cent volunteer organization with a 12-member Board of Directors. We are non-partisan and voluntary with about 16,000 members, the

largest taxpayers association in the State of Arizona."

The group's operating funds come from membership dues and proceeds from advertising in the Sun Cities map and telephone directory.

SCTA hires attorneys, accountants and sometimes expert witnesses to represent its members before the Arizona Corporation Commission or other governmental offices or agencies.

The group reviews and examines taxes, legislation and utility rate increases that affect Sun City residents. In the past, SCTA has been called upon to intervene with the Arizona Corporation Commission to prevent utility tax hikes or file lawsuits to protect the interests of its membership.

"As you may be aware, SCTA is no longer a party to a lawsuit filed against Recreation Centers of Sun City and AZ-AM Water," she said. The suit was filed after the Recreation Centers refused to call for a vote of the membership when an asset worth over \$50,000 is conveyed — a violation of the organization's bylaws, she said.

"Fortunately for the Taxpayers, Larry Spitz (a major union representative from Sun City) has consented to be a plaintiff in the lawsuit and to chair its legal committee," she said.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT January 29, 2003

Assessor spreads word on Prop 104

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

About 1,500 Sun City residents are currently taking advantage of the Senior Home Ownership Protection program, but Maricopa County Assessor Kevin Ross says he is sure there are many more qualified residents who have yet to enroll.

"We are still working to educate people about it," Mr. Ross said of the program that freezes full-cash property valuations for low-income senior citizens. "A lot of people in Sun City qualify for the program, but they don't know about it. It is surprising how many people are unaware of it even two years after its implementation."

Proposition 104, which created the program, was passed by voters in November 2000.

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 \$26,496 for a single person or \$33,120 for couples. Residents would have to reapply for the exemption every three years - to determine if there has been a change in status.

If a house is sold, it returns to the tax rolls at full-cash value, according to Mr. Ross. New owners have to wait two years to apply for a new assessment freeze.

Residents can enroll in the program by visiting with Jacque Varner, a representative of the Assessor's Office, when she visits Sun City each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. She occupies space at the Sun City Taxpayers Association office, 12611 N. 103rd Ave., between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on those days. Call 933-7530.

Mr. Ross also mentioned that he is attempting to save senior citizens more tax money by lobbying the Arizona Legislature to raise the income qualifier for an exemption for widows and widowers from \$13,200 to \$26,400.

November 13, 2002

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

SCTA president resigns unexpectedly

By **Mike Russo**
Independent Newspapers

The president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association Board of Directors unexpectedly resigned Oct. 29 and was replaced on an interim basis by the organization's first vice president.

Jack McManamon, who assumed SCTA's presidency last February, was replaced by Ray Dare, who served as the group's president the previous two years. He will serve as president until election of officers occurs the first Tuesday in February.

In announcing Mr. McManamon's resignation, Mr. Dare said, "Jack left a message on my answering machine Tuesday night (Oct. 29) saying he had to leave town suddenly. That was all."

Mr. Dare said he believes Mr. McManamon may have gone to Cleveland, where his son has been in the hospital with serious medical problems. "His son has been in intensive care for several weeks," Mr. Dare said.

A letter of resignation was

received by SCTA. It had been postmarked from Tulsa, Okla.

"I know he has been under a lot of stress," Mr. Dare said. "Whatever it was, it was serious."

Accepting Mr. McManamon's resignation as president and board member posed no problem for the SCTA Board, but the fact that Mr. McManamon was a candidate for a board seat in the Nov. 12 election proved a dilemma.

At the advice of board member Jim Trece, a retired attorney, the board left Mr. McManamon's name on the ballot since in his letter of resignation he did not specify that he wished to have his name removed from the ballot.

Since there were only three candidates for three board vacancies, Mr. McManamon was assured of re-election.

Mr. Dare said SCTA would send a letter to Mr. McManamon informing him of his victory and would await Mr. McManamon's decision.

"In February we would go into the appointment stage (to select a board replacement)," Mr. Dare said.

Battle rages over pipeline

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Gearing up for their election next week, the Sun City Taxpayers Association are continuing their advocacy of residents.

The SCTA is in the midst of a battle with the Recreation Centers of Sun City over a proposed Central Arizona water pipeline project that is estimated to cost residents about \$16.4 million to bring the Colorado River water to community golf courses.

The SCTA contends that the decision to construct a pipeline should be left to the voters, while the RCSC board contends that its decision to approve the pipeline is well within its rights.

Nevertheless, the courts left the decision to the

Arizona Corporation Commission, which reported that it plans to make a decision on the pipeline issue by the end of the year.

The taxpayers association is more than just fighting against the RCSC, as this year it made a concerted effort to advocate residents looking for a break on their property taxes.

The SCTA has worked with the Maricopa County Assessor's Office to be a liaison between residents and the assessor's office for its senior property tax valuation tax freeze, which allows low income seniors to freeze their taxes if they meet certain qualifications.

At an open house planned Tuesday at the SCTA offices, 12611 North 103rd Ave., Sun City, representatives from the Maricopa County Assessor's

Office will give out information about the tax freeze.

Because of the passage of Proposition 102 Nov. 5, the new qualifications for the tax freeze includes that seniors 65 or older be living in their residence for at least two years and have an income of \$32,700 or less per year as a couple.

Assessor's representatives will also be on hand for other residents who do not meet the tax freeze qualification to answer questions about their tax statements.

Voting for the SCTA election is scheduled to be in conjunction with the open house 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday. For information, call the SCTA at 933-7530.

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

ACC delays pipeline ruling



JERRY SWINTEK, president, Recreation Centers of Sun City: "Apparently they will stop at nothing. They just don't want this project going in, and they will go to the end of the Earth to stop it."

INVESTIGATION: Independent group to review Sun City Taxpayers' claims

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The pipeline feud continues with no end in sight.

The decision on the proposed pipeline that would bring Central Arizona Project water to Sun Cities golf courses has been postponed — again.

On Monday, the Arizona Corporation Commission, citing a claim by the Sun City Taxpayers Association, postponed Thursday's hearing on building the pipeline. Commissioners postponed the hearing to give them more time to review an evidentiary matter involving the SCTA

claim, said commission spokeswoman Heather Murphy.

ACC Chairman William Mundell, backed by Commissioner Jim Irvin, agreed to postpone Thursday's meeting to investigate the claim included in SCTA documents. Commissioner Marc Spitzer wanted the meeting to proceed.

SCTA documents reiterate the association's contention that putting CAP water into the Agua Fria recharge facility north of Jomax Road would be cheaper than building the pipeline and would still accomplish the goal of recharging the aquifer.

Mundell wants an independent group to review the hydrologic relationship between the aquifer and the Agua Fria facility before the ACC makes its ruling, Murphy said.

"The chairman would like the judge to get an independent

analysis to verify the allegations of the Sun City Taxpayers Association," she said. Murphy said ACC Hearing Officer Dwight Nodes will hold a conference sometime in the next week to look into the issue.

Recreation Centers of Sun City board President Jerry Swintek said he isn't surprised at the latest development.

"I am not shocked with the Taxpayers," he said. "They will do anything to hold up the process. Now it just continues — who knows?"

Swintek said SCTA officials have been told repeatedly there is nothing illegal about building the pipeline, but they refuse to accept it.

"Apparently they will stop at nothing," he said. "They just don't want this project going in, and

See ACC seeks, A5

From A1

they will go to the end of the Earth to stop it.

"It is time this community joins in the conservation effort."

The Sun Cities rely on groundwater for all their water, including irrigation of the golf courses.

SCTA Vice President Ray Dare said the ACC finally realized it had to investigate the impacts of all proposals on the aquifer.

"My only thing now is, a little truth will finally come out," he said, adding that he is delighted with the ACC's latest decision. "After four years of fighting this, it seems we are going to get to the bottom of it. I welcome that, and I feel good about it."

Arizona-American Water

Co. President Ray Jones said while he understands the question being raised, he believes it is a non-issue: "We are at a loss to understand the concerns."

Jones said the pipeline seems to be an ongoing issue that will not go away.

"We are extremely disappointed the commission did not act on the case at this time," he said. "I do not know what they are going to ask us to do."

The pipeline issue was first brought to the attention of the ACC in 1997 during a Citizens Utilities rate-case hearing. Citizens, which was bought out by Arizona-American Water Co., wanted to maintain its CAP-water contract with the Central Arizona Water Conservation District and have residents pick

up the cost, but it had no plan in place to use the water. The commission mandated such a plan before Citizens could charge residents for the water.

The pipeline in question would bring CAP water into Sun City for use on golf courses, and would tie into an existing pipeline in Sun City West to serve golf courses there as well. The pipeline would run south along 99th Avenue, follow Del Webb Boulevard and branch off to the golf courses from there. Private golf courses are unaffected.

The cost to build the pipeline is estimated at \$16.4 million.

Michael Maresch can be reached at 876-2513 or mmaresch@aztrib.com.

SCTA vows to carry on fight against CAP water plan

Group is prepared to take case to state Supreme Court

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

Ray Dare, president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, reaffirmed the organization's pledge to fight implementation of the Sun Cities Groundwater Savings Plan during SCTA's annual membership meeting Jan. 17.

The Sun Cities Groundwater Savings Plan, which was formulated in 1999 by the Central Arizona Project Task Force, proposes to use Citizens Water Resources' 6,561 acre-foot CAP water allocation to irrigate the public golf courses in Sun City and Sun City West, thereby preserving groundwater.

SCTA has objected to that usage, preferring instead to have the allocation stored with the Agua Fria Recharge Project.

Following a marathon two-day hearing Jan. 9 and 10 before Arizona Corporation Commission Administrative Law Judge Dwight Nodes, which produced a 946-page transcript, attorneys for Citizens Water Resources and the SCTA have until Feb. 11 to submit closing briefs to Judge Nodes, who will then make a recommendation to the commissioners.

Mr. Dare said the plan is not cost effective and does not provide sufficient direct benefit.

"The CAP pipeline project ... would cost \$2,286 per acre-foot of water, for 4,189 acre-foot of water (for Sun City only), as compared to the Agua Fria Recharge facility, which would cost \$90 per acre-foot," Mr. Dare said. "In addition, the recharge facility construction cost is not an added burden to the real estate owners of Sun City since the funding for the project has been collected by a Central Arizona Water Conservation District tax."



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

Ray Dare, president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, presented a token of the organization's appreciation to Jacquie Varner of the Maricopa County Assessor's Office during the Jan. 17 annual SCTA membership meeting. Ms. Varner has been coming to Sun City for the last five years to help residents with problems concerning their property valuations.

Further, Mr. Dare noted, "We supported then and now any renewable resource application of water that benefits by direct application or by application reduces the burden on the aquifer."

"The Sun City Taxpayers Association, however, do not support any renewable resource application at any cost without meeting a thorough value analysis study," he continued.

Mr. Dare said SCTA agrees with the Residential Utilities Consumer Organization that implementation of the ground-

water savings plan would be "unnecessarily costly for the benefits received."

As for the lawsuit filed by SCTA against the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc., seeking to void the water transfer agreement between RCSC and Citizens Water Resources, Mr. Dare indicated that SCTA felt vindicated when direct testimony in the civil suit "established that the net results of the groundwater use plan has no savings affect

to the aquifer."

"We are looking to higher courts of Arizona for legal solutions in these matters and by the no vote attitude of the RCSC management, it appears the fight is headed in a costly fashion to the (Arizona) Supreme Court," Mr. Dare said.



Daily News-Sun



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Judge tosses SCTA lawsuit



Ray Dare,
president of
Taxpayers: "I am
totally against that
type of ruling."

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A lawsuit tied to the proposed Central Arizona Project water pipeline in Sun City was dismissed by a superior court judge Tuesday.

The Sun City Taxpayers Association, which filed the lawsuit against the Recreation Centers of Sun City and Citizens Water Resources, contended the decision to build such a project should be left to the RCSC membership rather than the board.

SCTA also has argued that groundwater savings projects such as a recharge basin in the Agua Fria River bed would cost less

money and still accomplish the goal of saving groundwater.

The ruling, however, quashed the SCTA's argument and paved the way for the pipeline's construction.

"We're pretty excited about the ruling," RCSC President Jerry Swintek said today. "We feel pretty confident now in trying to get our approval of the project from the Arizona Corporation Commission."

The ACC came close to approving the project earlier in the year, but was forced to suspend its action once SCTA filed its lawsuit.

SCTA President Ray Dare said today he was not aware of the

ruling, but said any ruling against the lawsuit would show that the community's articles of incorporation do not hold up in court.

"I am totally against that type of ruling," he said. "It shows that the articles mean nothing."

A major component of SCTA's lawsuit was trying to prove that the RCSC board broke Sun City's articles of incorporation by ruling on a multi-million dollar project instead of leaving the decision up to the voters.

RCSC has defended its decision, and Tuesday a judge agreed.

The lawsuit has been making its

way through the court system for several months, delaying the pipeline project.

The last remaining aspect to be settled by the courts on the matter is whether RCSC will be allowed to bill SCTA for legal fees it incurred while trying to defend its position on the project.

"The rec centers are a non-profit corporation," Swintek said. "We don't have the money to pay attorney fees for frivolous litigation. It hurts all members."

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



Jerry Swintek,
president of
RCSC: "We're
pretty excited
about the ruling."

Citizens asks for SCTA suit dismissal

SCTA: Group officials expect RCSC to file additional motion

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Water Company is fighting back in the battle to bring Central Arizona Project water to the Sun Cities.

The fate of a pipeline designed to put the water to use in the Sun Cities seemed a foregone conclusion just over a month ago when the Arizona Corporation Commission was poised to approve its construction. But like a book with endless chapters, another twist has been added that pits community groups against one another — essentially residents fighting residents, with one of their service companies thrown into the mix.

Last week in Superior Court, the water company filed a motion to dismiss a lawsuit against itself and the Sun City Recreation Centers on the issue of whether a pipeline should be built to bring Central Arizona Project water to the Sun Cities.

The water company, a Citizens Utilities subsidiary, filed the motion on six different grounds.

Tracy Spoon, who serves on the SCTA board, said she is not surprised by the action.

"We knew of the matter on Friday when we went down (to the Arizona Corporation Commission)," she said.

Spoon said the SCTA was expecting the motion and also is expecting the RCSC to follow suit.

The anticipated hearing on the motion to dismiss the case likely will be in about four months, though nobody knows for sure when the case will be heard, Spoon said.

"There have been cases that have taken years to settle," she said.

The Corporation Commission meanwhile, is expected to make a ruling on the pipeline in the next two months.

But Spoon said there is an alternative to SCTA's lawsuit and the motion to dismiss.

"There is a possibility of a settlement," she said.

But Spoon conceded that at this point that is not likely to occur. Any settlement would have to include the RCSC letting its members vote on the pipeline.

The SCTA in early April filed the lawsuit against the RCSC and the Sun City Water Company. The suit claimed the RCSC violated its bylaws by approving the pipeline without putting it to a vote of its members.

Although SCTA directors are expecting the Recreation Centers to follow the water company's lead and file its own motion, RCSC board President Jerry Swintek said he does not know of any plan to file such a motion, but said he just got

back into town and wasn't sure what the RCSC's attorneys were doing.

The water company's six grounds for dismissal of the lawsuit are:

- The SCTA has no standing to seek declaratory relief based on the exchange agreement between the water company and the RCSC.

- SCTA board members have no taxpayer standing.

- The Sun City Water Company is not a proper party to the suit.

- The SCTA's complaint is an improper collateral attack on final Arizona Corporation Commission decisions.

- The SCTA has misread the exchange agreement.

- The SCTA's complaint is a sham.

"Motions to dismiss are standard operating procedures," Spoon said in dismissing the motion's claims.

SCTA demands hearings

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Qwest Communications telephone bills went under a microscope Tuesday morning.

At the Sun City Taxpayers Association board of directors meeting, members moved to support full-scale hearings on proposed phone-rate hikes, claiming hidden charges are costing Sun Citizens too much money. Qwest currently is in negotiations with the Arizona Corporation Commission, hoping to raise its revenue \$42.9 million a year.

The company's proposal primarily would affect residential customers with increased private-line charges and a directory assistance fee increase of 10 cents, according to Jon Poston of Arizonans for Competition in Telephone Service.

Poston, who spoke with the Taxpayers for about an hour Tuesday, said Qwest is planning to abolish the one free directory assistance call consumers currently get, and hike the cost from 75 cents to 85 cents per use.

"The telecommunications market works with nickels and dimes," he said. "But all that money adds up and comes out of the pocket of residents."

Although the increases seem rather small, Poston said there is a myriad of similar charges that also will increase, making it necessary for a full-scale hearing on the rates.

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2000

From A1

Board members spoke specifically about Qwest's new redial service, which prompts callers to have a busy number redialed automatically for a charge of 75 cents.

Other discussion revolved around phone charges that board members said Qwest representatives cannot explain.

"All (Qwest) will tell you is that they bill the same way they did in Colorado," association President Raymond Dare said. "They don't know what it means, and they just expect us to pay it. I think the Taxpayers should get very involved with this process."

The last leg of a three-part hearing between Qwest and the Arizona Corporation Commission is scheduled for the end of this week, when a public meeting date will be scheduled. Results from the public meeting will determine whether a settlement or a full-fledged hearing will be needed for the rate increases.

So far, according to Poston, the Corporation Commission has drastically reduced Qwest's proposed revenue increase from \$200 million down to \$43 million.

"The original request to raise \$200 million shows that this proposal was not thought out," he said. "It was sort of throw a number at the wall and see what parts will stick."

The Taxpayers Association on Tuesday threw its support behind

numerous other community groups such as the Sun City Home Owners Association that are demanding a full hearing on the rate issues.

"It stands to reason that many groups are asking for a hearing," Poston said. "If a settlement is accepted without a hearing, the commission will not be able to address particular instances of the telephone charges until a new rate case is brought up again. And that can be many years away."

Adding to the Taxpayers' fight against the proposed rates is the recent defeat of Proposition 108 on November's ballot, which asked voters if Qwest should be deregulated. The initiative failed by 80 percent of the vote.

"The voters spoke with that result," Poston said. "I don't think state industries should overrule election results."

Following the regular meeting of the board, the utilities committee met to discuss the association's role in requesting a full hearing. The request will be submitted to the Corporation Commission and will be considered in its decision on the matter.

The Qwest rate hearing will be discussed in detail at the Sun City Taxpayers Association's annual meeting 1 p.m. Jan. 11 in the Sundial Auditorium on Boswell Boulevard.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 623-876-2526.



SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION THE ACTION GROUP

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WE CAMPAIGNED ON MEASURE (HC 2028) — FREEZING VALUATIONS ON RESIDENCES OF LOW INCOME PEOPLE, 65 OR OLDER, WHO HAVE LIVED IN THE HOUSE FOR AT LEAST 2 YEARS. IT PASSED BOTH THE HOUSE & SENATE.

OVER

IN 1999

SCTA DEFEATED HOUSE BILL 2095, A REGRESSIVE HOUSE BILL WHICH WOULD HAVE RAISED SECONDARY PROPERTY TAXES TO 18% OF THE CASH VALUE OF YOUR HOME.

IN 1999

SCTA PARTICIPATED IN THE GOVERNORS DUI COUNCIL, WHICH SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED AND PASSED THE FIRST OPEN CONTAINER LAW IN ARIZONA.

IN 1999

SCTA, AS A PUBLIC SERVICE TO TAXPAYERS, SPONSORED A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE TAX ASSESSORS OFFICE FROM 1/8/99 TO 4/22/99. THIS REPRESENTATIVE INTERPRETED PROPERTY TAX EVALUATIONS CARDS, FILED EXEMPTIONS AND FILED APPEALS. (THIS SERVICE CONTINUED IN 2000).

IN 1998

SCTA DEFEATED BOTH HOUSE/SENATE BILL PROPOSING THE DOUBLING OF PROPERTY TAXES IN SUN CITY PLUS THE ADDITION OF A SECONDARY PROPERTY SCHOOL TAX, THUS CONSTITUTING HUGE SAVINGS FOR SUN CITY.

IN 1996

SCTA DEFEATED THE PROPOSED MARICOPA COUNTY CHARTER GOVERNMENT.

IN 1988

SCTA CONTESTED THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF SENATE BILL 1261 (SUN CITY SCHOOL TAX), IT WAS DECLARED TO BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL ON NOV. 26, 1990 BY THE SUPERIOR COURT, SCTA WON AND SAVED SUN CITY \$83 MILLION DOLLARS.

IN 1980

SCTA LED A DRIVE, AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO REMOVE THE SALES TAX ON FOOD, SCTA WON.

Daily News-Sun • Friday, Jan. 14, 2000

Sun City home values expected to jump

JEFF OWENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

1-14-00

Maricopa County Assessor Kevin Ross said Monday that Sun Citians should anticipate "high appreciation on most homes" in the year 2000.

Speaking to about 25 people at the annual membership meeting of the Sun City Taxpayers Association in the Sundial Recreation Center, Ross said he expects a 3½ percent increase in values on Sun City homes.

Ross said that last year, Sun City's average valuation went up from \$78,000 to \$81,500, resale went up from \$92,000 to \$98,000. Condominiums and mobile home rates remained flat.

The assessor, one of a number of county officials to speak Monday afternoon, said he looks forward to "making Sun City a major, major focus point" for his office.

Jan Brewer, Maricopa County District 4 supervisor, told the group her office's biggest

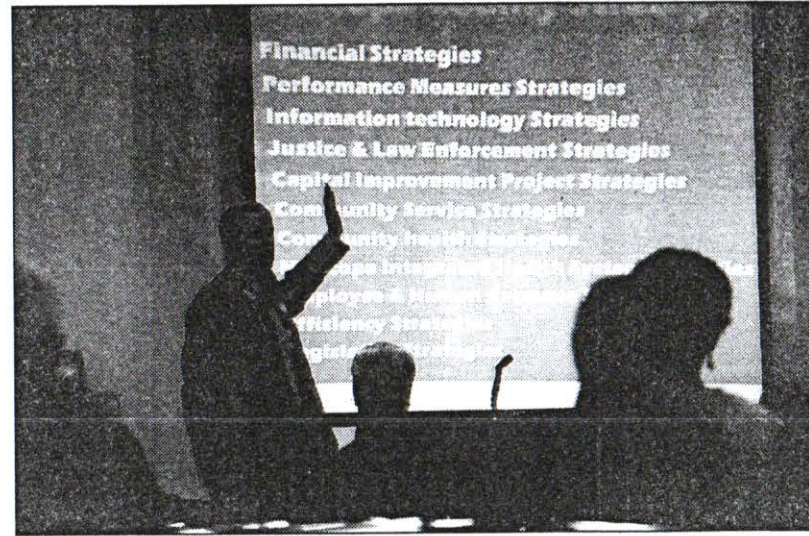
accomplishment in 1999 was "providing the first property tax cut in over 10 years."

Brewer also noted her office's contribution to improvements at Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital through the sale of tax-exempt bonds, and funding for the Olive Branch Senior Center.

Of Olive Branch, Brewer said: "I think it's a wonderful, wonderful program, and I'm very proud of it."

Brewer said Sun Citians can expect to hear a lot about Arizona's tobacco settlement over the next year, adding that with millions of county dollars spent on tobacco-related health-care costs, the \$3.1 billion state settlement fell "far below what we actually deserve."

County Transportation Director Tom Buick said his office is "going to deliver the right transportation system at the right time and the right cost," and that Sun City's approximately 230 miles of roadway will get whatever maintenance and improvement



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Maricopa County Manager David Smith chats to a small crowd at the Sundial Recreation Center for the SCTA membership meeting.

attention they need.

Planning and Zoning Director Joy Rich said explosive population growth will be handled in the hope that "we can craft a Maricopa County that you can be

happy and satisfied with."

Arizona Corporation Commission Chairman Jim Irvin, while not a county official, stopped by to say he would "demand better service from U S WEST."

THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

FOUNDED 1968

THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION WAS FOUNDED IN 1968, INCORPORATED IN 1969, TO PROTECT SUN CITIANS FROM UNWARRANTED TAX INCREASES AND UNJUSTIFIABLE UTILITY RATE INCREASES.

The Sun City Taxpayers Association is the largest Taxpayers Association in the State of Arizona. It is a non-profit, 100% volunteer organization made up of a 15 member board elected for a three-year term. Board members are selected for their knowledge, experience and expertise in order to better serve the needs of Sun City.

SCTA represents Sun City in the fields of TAXES, UTILITIES and LEGISLATION.

The SCTA Board is in constant contact with our nine Legislators from the 3 districts in Sun City (15, 17 and 19). The Arizona Corporation Commission, our Maricopa County Supervisor of District 4 and the County Sheriff.

When needed the SCTA employs attorneys, accountants and expert witnesses to testify and represent the residents of Sun City before the AZ. Corp. Comm., State Legislature, the Board of Supervisors plus other government organizations.

SCTA is affiliated with and supports 14 other local non-profit organizations.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In 1999 SCTA defeated House Bill 2095, a regressive House Bill which would have raised Secondary Property Taxes to 18% of the cash value of your home.
- In 1999 the SCTA participated in the Governors DUI Council which successfully developed and passed the first open container law in Arizona.
- In 1999 the SCTA sponsored a Town Hall Informational Meeting to provide the community with the opportunity to meet Kevin Ross, Maricopa County Tax Assessor and have their questions answered by the Assessor. In fall 1999 SCTA sponsored "Meet Your County Supervisors". A get acquainted event.
- In 1998 SCTA worked with the legislature to pass 5 bills beneficial to Sun City and to defeat 4 bills detrimental to Sun City.
- In 1998 SCTA defeated both House/Senate Bill proposing the doubling of Property Taxes in Sun City plus an addition of a Secondary School Tax thus constituting a high savings for Sun City.
- In 1998 SCTA worked with the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff to get the JAIL ISSUE on the ballot.
- In 1996 SCTA defeated the proposed Maricopa County Charter Government. Voters of Sun City voted over 72% against the approval of the Charter.



THE ACTION GROUP

S.C.T.A.
"GUARDIAN OF
SUN CITY'S POCKETBOOK"

SUN CITY TAXPAYERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.

12630 N. 103rd Ave., Suite 221
Sun City, Arizona 85351-3476

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FAX: (623) 933-0394

OFFICE HOURS
Monday-Friday
9-12

- In 1991-1993 SCTA fought and won reinstatement of the personal Income Tax exemptions.
- In 1989 the SCTA helped defeat the proposed Val-Trans Mass Trans. System which would have added 1/2% sales tax for 30 years.
- In 1988 the SCTA contested the constitutionality of Senate Bill 1261 (Sun City School Tax). It was declared unconstitutional on November 26, 1990, by the Superior Court. SCTA WON and saved Sun City \$83 million dollars. (Renamed: THE LARKIN FUND). SCTA spent \$250,000 in legal fees.
- In 1987 SCTA led the campaign which defeated the Rio Salado Project and the increase in taxes.
- In 1983 SCTA helped to establish the Residential Utility Consumers Office (RUCO). RUCO acts on behalf of residential utility consumers at the AZ. CORP. COMM.
- In 1980 SCTA led a drive at the local level to remove the sales tax on food. SCTA WON.
- Between 1977 and 1984, SCTA was the only Sun City Organization to intervene in numerous unwarranted rate requests by the Sun City Water/Sewer Companies (CITIZENS UTILITIES). Saving residents \$600,000 during that period.

WE WORK WITH THE FIVE (5) BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

- a. GOVERNOR b. LEGISLATURE BRANCH c. ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH-ACC
 d. JUDICIAL BRANCH e. FEDERAL SENATORS / REPRESENTATIVES



"MISSION STATEMENT"

1999 FORWARD INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

THE MISSION OF THE SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION IS TO PROTECT SUN CITY'S POCKETBOOK, LIFESTYLE AND PEACE OF MIND WITHOUT PREJUDICES OR POLITICAL BIAS.

WE PLEDGE TO WORK TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF SUN CITY, TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT IN OUR THINKING, AND TO PURSUE ISSUES BASED ON MERIT, BENEFIT, FAIRNESS, FACT AND TRUTH.

MARY ELAINE CHARLESWORTH
 1998 PRESIDENT 1999

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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PLEASE CHECK: M/M MR. MRS. MISS MS

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DATE _____ SPOUSE _____

DUES ARE: Couple: 3 Years \$10.00 Single: 3 Years \$5.00

SCTA part of effort to freeze property valuations for seniors

Assessor: Plan would be tax neutral

By **MIKE RUSSO**
Independent Newspapers

A group of Arizonans, including the Sun City Taxpayers, is pushing a plan that would reduce the property tax liability of senior citizens by freezing valuations.

The organization, Senior Homeowner Partnership, led by state Dist. 21 Rep. Dean Cooley, is looking to have legislation introduced to modify the valuation increase for seniors 65 and older.

It is somewhat similar to a measure presented during the last Legislative session, but would benefit only seniors citizens, rather than all homeowners. That legislation did not become law.

"This proposal would freeze val-

uations at the present level for people ages sixty-five or older who have owned and lived in their residence for two or three years," explained Mary Charlesworth, SCTA president. The length of time residents have owned and lived in their homes has yet to be determined, according to Maricopa County Assessor Kevin Ross.

"The last time, they left out so much and it did not make sense. There were no guidelines," Ms. Charlesworth said.

"It would be for the whole state not just Sun City," she continued. "We would benefit the least because we already have low taxes."

The proposal, in its present form,

See ■ **TAX PLAN**, Page 10

would allow people to apply to county assessors to freeze assessments at their most recent level who have lived in their property for two or three years, according to Mr. Ross. "They will also be required to file Arizona tax returns and claim Arizona as their primary state of residency," Mr. Ross explained.

There would likely be some income guidelines established to determine eligibility, Mr. Ross noted.

"AARP would come up with income guidelines," Mr. Ross said.

Presently, Arizona seniors can receive a property tax exemption if they meet certain criteria, including a maximum income \$13,000 for a married couple.

"This would piggyback that program and allow seniors of all kinds to qualify," Mr. Ross said. "A good majority of seniors would likely qualify."

Seniors who move would be eligible to reapply for the program after the yet to be determined waiting period. That would not adversely affect most seniors, according to Mr. Ross.

"Most seniors, when they move, they downsize, so they should not be hurt," Mr. Ross said.

The plan would only affect the property's full cash value. "It will affect the appreciation portion," Mr. Ross said.

"Rates have remained stable but valuations have gone up considerably, many as much as 50 percent," he continued. "By stabilizing the valuations it goes a long way to stabilizing their tax bill."

Mr. Ross conceded the plan would reduce the amount of property taxes raised from senior citizens,

but he does not expect non-seniors to be overburdened.

"We don't know how many of the homes are owned by seniors," Mr. Ross said. "We don't know how many are primary residences, and we are not sure of income levels."

"Even if ten percent of the population qualifies for this, it would still only affect four percent of the overall valuation," he continued.

"There should be very little tax shift," Mr. Ross added. "This is not like California's Proposition 13. It will have very little impact on the overall tax rates and would be a help for the targeted group. This will be tax neutral."

Any loss of property tax revenues resulting from this proposal would more than be offset by the stipulations that recipients declare Arizona as their primary state of residence and pay state income tax, Mr. Ross noted.

"Additional revenues will be generated by declaring Arizona as their state of residency, such as vehicle registration," Mr. Ross said.

"We have asked Brenda Burns to support it," Ms. Charlesworth said. However, the Senate leader has expressed some concern about the constitutionality of the proposal, according to Ms. Charlesworth.

Assessor Ross hailed the plan as a good method to bring "tax stability for the majority of seniors."

Mr. Ross, who has been sitting in on the Senior Homeowner Partnership's meetings as a technical advisor, said he believes the organization intends to have the legislation introduced during the upcoming session.

However, even if the legislation passes, seniors should not expect immediate relief. "Even if passed it may not take effect until 2001 or 2002 since valuations are done two years in advance," Mr. Ross said.

SCTA mulls increase in member dues

By KATE FLEITAS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The self-proclaimed "Guardian of Sun City's Pocketbook" may ask its members for more money.

Mary Charlesworth, president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, asked the board of directors Tuesday to consider a hike in membership dues to cover the group's expenses.

The association serves as a "watchdog" over utility companies, tax bills and other legislation affecting the Sun Cities.

The bulk of the association's income comes from donations

and membership fees. SCTA also gets some funds from the phone directory revenue.

"I don't know how we could cover expenses without donations," Charlesworth said.

The group will also consider opening membership to businesses.

Reaction to Charlesworth's announcement was split.

Board member Elmer Becsi believes the idea of asking members for more money goes against the group's philosophy.

"I don't want to disturb anything that might be detrimental to the organization," he said.

Members of the association pay \$5 for a three-year membership. The amount has not changed in more than 10 years. If the membership fee was raised to \$2 per year, Charlesworth believes it would produce sufficient income to cover the association's expenses.

The association has more than 20,000 members.

Membership fees cover mailings and the salaries of two part-time employees. Sometimes, expenses include legal fees.

As a non-profit organization, the association receives a break on bulk mailings. However, many of the association's

mailings do not meet the bulk rate requirements for non-profit groups, Charlesworth said.

The board decided to table the fee issue until its next meeting, said Edward Beyer, board member.

Charlesworth says she's been bombarded with telephone calls regarding the Sun City Recreation Centers' increase in assessment fees next year. She instructed board members to forward calls to the recreation centers or members of the board of directors.

"We do not control the rec board," she told SCTA board

members.

In other business, the board may consider changing its bylaws to keep Charlesworth as president. The current bylaws contain term limits of two years for the president.

"It's a shame when somebody dedicated a lot of time and effort that they can't be a part of us," Becsi said.

Charlesworth was appointed president in June 1997. After serving out the remainder of the appointment, she was elected in December 1997 to keep the position for another two years.

Her term is scheduled to end in early January.

Taxpayers association swings big stick in Arizona politics

By RUTHANN HOGUE
Northwest Valley/state editor

Call Mary Charlesworth what you will, but please don't call her a lobbyist.

Never mind that the request comes from the president of one of Arizona's most politically powerful groups. With about 20,000 members behind her — all of them senior citizens — there's no question that the leader of the Sun City Taxpayers Association wields political clout.

"I'm not a lobbyist, I'm a visitor," said Charlesworth, who frequently dines with the likes of Gov. Jane Hull and Brenda Burns, president of the Senate.

"I just visit people and make requests. And I have no hesitation in asking for what I want."

More often than not, people in high places listen.

Perhaps that's why groups such as The Associated Press, who recently

interviewed Charlesworth, are taking a look at the influence of seniors as the November election nears.

"We are an influence because we are a block and we get out and vote," Charlesworth said, referring not only to members of SCTA in Del Webb's 38-year-old retirement community, but to senior citizens in general.

The Associated Press report points to retirement communities — which are predominantly Republican — as a "major reason why Republicans rule the state despite having only a slight edge in voter registrations."

Such reports are supported by precinct returns, said Yvonne Reed, executive assistant to the county recorder in Maricopa County.

Although election records do not reveal the age of specific voters, precincts represented by age-restricted communities account for about 45 to 55 percent of the total vote.

"Those precincts in the retirement communities turn out heavier than any of the other precincts," Reed said.

Bruce Merrill, a widely known local pollster and professor with Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Telecommunication and Journalism, agrees.

"The older a person is, the more likely they are to vote," Merrill said. "Someone more than 60 years old is twice as likely to vote as someone under 30."

In an election year with a ho-hum ballot, the disparity between the senior vote and that of the general population is expected to be magnified.

Case in point:

■ The contest for attorney general has failed to raise any eyebrows.

► See SCTA leads, A5

OVER

SCTA leads senior block

◀ From A1

■ So far, the fate of cock fighting hasn't stirred the public into a frenzy, although some believe that it will draw Hispanics to the polls.

■ Legalizing marijuana and other Class 1 drugs is gaining some attention, but as a recurring item, is becoming passe.

■ And, compared to previous races heightened by high profile scandals, this year's governor's race seems dull.

"Unless Jane D. Hull does something worse than Bill Clinton, she's going to be elected," Merrill said.

Such an agenda, he said, isn't likely to draw younger voters.

Even so, senior citizens will likely show up at the polls.

"That's why older people have such a significant influence," Merrill said.

So, what does Charlesworth

foresee as the product of that influence come November?

For starters, Hull will probably retain her seat as governor.

"She does have to keep us happy," Charlesworth said, warning of the dangers of raising taxes and imposing secondary school taxes. "That better not happen. I just think we'd all be up in arms again."

SCTA members aren't likely to support protecting legalized cock fighting.

"They are upset if you kill a rabbit in the road. I think they'd be mortified about the idea of having a cock fight," she said.

Regarding legalization of Class 1 drugs such as heroin, cocaine and marijuana, Charlesworth is a bit hesitant.

"That's a terrible bill," she said, explaining that she believes it is worded to confuse voters. "The worst part of this is it's not really about mari-

juana. It's about Class 1 drugs. I resent the lying about it. If someone wants to legalize drugs, just say so."

Current issues aside, Charlesworth said she is confident that seniors will continue to dominate Arizona's political arena.

"They could be 90 and they still are taking care of their responsibility," the 61-year-old home refurbisher said.

"We were all raised in an era when you were taught to vote, and if you didn't, vote, you don't have a right to gripe.

"Personally, I'm stubborn enough to want my say. I think we still have the work ethic and moral ethic and that we believe in responsibility. If you're not voting, you can't hold their (government officials') feet to the fire."

Charlesworth said it's difficult for seniors who live in retirement communities to influence their younger

counterparts to follow them to the polls. She reminisced about her own childhood when "old people and young people were not cut off" and she often played street games such as hide and seek with a 90-year-old partner.

"I think the separation is one thing," she said. "Do we influence anybody? I don't know anymore."

Despite the clout SCTA wields by virtue of its size and the age of its members, its Sun City location leaves it open to criticism.

The media in surrounding suburban communities, for example, have been known to portray Sun Citians as penny pinchers who continually vote down school bonds and overrides.

Charlesworth downplays such criticism noting the response she's witnessed from state senators and representatives when she's testified at various hearings.

Daily News-Sun

Wednesday, Aug. 6, 1997

Burns speaks at SCTA meeting

By RUTHANN HOGUE
Staff writer

Arizona Long-Term Care System topped state Rep. Bob Burn's talk to the Sun City Taxpayers Association board meeting Tuesday.

The District 17 Republican from Glendale and chairman of the House Appropriations Committee also addressed revamping or reorganizing Child Protective Services and retooling ComCare, which is embroiled in a Chapter 11 bankruptcy and a federal lawsuit in which ComCare accuses the state of unconstitutionally taking its assets.

Taxpayers' president, Hawley Atkinson, welcomed Burns as "a good friend of Sun City."

"He may not always do what we want, but he listens," Atkinson said. "I think he is one of the reasons Sun City fares so well in this state."

With regard to long-term health care, Burns said many counties are experiencing difficulty in providing services that are paid for by taxes on private property. Gila and Pinal counties' systems are most likely to go bankrupt.

In Gila County, insufficient funding is traceable to the small amount of private land, about 3 percent, that forms the tax base in the area, he said.

Burns and others from the Legislature will participate in a retreat with the state's county supervisors this month to discuss possible solutions.

"The counties' solution may be different than the state Legislature's," Burns said. "The counties want to turn it over to the state for support, and let the counties out."

The Legislature will also review a recent commitment from the governor's office to pump \$9 million into Child Protective Services and the state attorney general's office. The funds would allow CPS to hire additional case workers and the attorney general's office to hire more attorneys.

"I told the governor that I couldn't support additional funding without changes in CPS's structure," Burns said. "That has troubled me for some time."

A committee organized to look at the issue identified 30 items regarding CPS's structure that Burns said he believes need to be addressed. Among them are opening court proceedings and allowing due process for the opponent.

"There is no defense for the accused," Burns said. "The parents are left out of the loop. They don't have any opportunity to challenge the investigation. Many times, there is a lack of evidence to justify what CPS does."

Another area of concern, Burns said, is retooling ComCare, which provides behavioral health services for Maricopa County residents.

ComCare is a privately owned non-profit agency that contracts through the Department of Health Services.

Although it had a budget surplus of \$18 million a year ago, it has changed its operating procedures based on recommendations from the Department of Health Services.

These days, the surplus funding has been replaced with a budget crisis and legal troubles when DHS sued it for breach of contract.

"They went the other way," Burns said. "They opened the flood gates, quickly ate up their balance and began to head into the red."

"When ComCare opened the gates and let all these people in, they interpreted that as identifying a need. I think that requires considerable examination. It may not equate to need as much as it equates to want."

Another priority for Burns is a new performance appraisal program known as Program Authorization Review that will allow more agencies to be cut from the state budget, thereby saving tax dollars.

The idea is to move from a line-item budget to a program budget format, which Burns said will offer a better feel for how money is spent.

With the current method, it's hard to identify overlap among programs, Burns said, adding that there is a tremendous amount of waste at upper and middle management levels.

Under Program Authorization Review programs will be identified at each agency, and self-evaluated by each agency for the review of the Budget Committee Staff of the Gov-

ernor's Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting.

Three possible recommendations can be made: to eliminate, retain or to modify each of 1,100 to 1,400 programs.

"We will look at the mission of the program and find in many cases we are no longer serving the original mission," Burns said.

By identifying programs that have drifted, Burns said, it may be easier to justify their elimination.

Constituents from such groups tend to be vocal in support of retaining their programs, he said.

And groups whose members favor cutting spending rarely testify against specific programs, he added.

Burns suggested that taxpayers make phone calls or send e-mail and letters to lawmakers regarding programs for which they oppose funding.

"We don't hear from those people during the appropriations process," Burns said. "It's hard to get the votes needed to cut programs when all the testimony is in favor of spending."

In other business, Atkinson and Preston Welch of the Utilities Committee plan to attend an Arizona Corporation Commission public hearing at 10 a.m. Thursday to oppose a proposed \$3-per-month rate increase for Southwest Gas Co. customers.

About 38 percent of Sun City homes are served by Southwest Gas, Welch said.

Survey reveals strong support for SC Taxpayers

Majority say SCTA living up to its mission of protecting local pocketbooks

By MIKE RUSSO
Independent Newspapers

A vast majority of its members believe the Sun City Taxpayers Association is fulfilling its role as "Guardian of Sun City's Pocketbook."

Ninety-one percent of 380 respondents to a November telephone survey felt as though the SCTA has lived up to its motto.

In addition, 28 percent had a very favorable impression of the SCTA and another 64 percent held a favorable opinion of the organization. Only 1 percent had an unfavorable

opinion.

Mary Charlesworth, SCTA president, said she was pleased with the results. "We got a good response," she said. "It seems as though we are representing the people."

The survey was conducted by professional interviewers who asked questions designed

and pre-tested by Dr. Bruce Merrill, a professor of mass communications and director of the Media Research Program in the Walter Cronkite School at Arizona State University.

"They polled 1,600 people to get the 380 responses," Mrs. Charlesworth explained.

See ■ SURVEY, Page 9

They had to contact so many people because some of the respondents would only answer some of the questions but not all of them. So they had to call someone else. Also some of the people were new to the community and had no opinion." While others were reluctant to respond.

The survey was undertaken because "we wanted to know if there was anything negative so we could fix it," Mrs. Charlesworth noted.

Few surprises were contained in the report, according to Mrs. Charlesworth.

One of the things she had not expected was the support Sun City residents expressed for a new county jail, that would likely be financed through a property tax.

However, 57 percent of respondents favored the plan and only 22 percent were opposed. Another 21 percent were undecided.

Another unexpected response was the mere 1 percent who said the level of volunteerism is what they liked most about living in Sun City.

The community has always prided itself on being a "City of Volunteers." However, that may be

changing, based on the survey responses and the recent announcement that the Council of Service Clubs would be folding June 30 after more than a dozen years of existence due to lack of participation.

Mrs. Charlesworth offered another explanation for the apparent decline in volunteer spirit of Sun Citians.

"A lot of people have gone back to work (out of necessity) and don't have the time to volunteer," she said. "Also, people are living longer and as they get older, they are unable to volunteer."

She also noted, "A lot of people just assume someone else will do it, so they don't get involved themselves. That's part of the problem."

While only 1 percent of those responding to the survey felt volunteerism was the most enjoyable aspect of living in Sun City, 24 percent said the plethora of activities and recreational opportunities was what they found most enjoyable. That was followed by: friendly, caring, neighborly people, 13 percent; quiet, relaxing peaceful environment, 11; clean and modern, 11; favorable climate, 11.

From Page 1

Wednesday, July 3, 1996 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

Tax group to study charter draft

By J.J. McCORMACK
Senior staff writer

The Sun City Taxpayers Association expects to give a thumbs up or down next Tuesday to the final draft of a proposed Maricopa County charter.

The tax watchdog organization's board of directors is convening a special meeting to decide if it will support or oppose the charter, which will be put to a public vote in November.

But questions loom whether such a proposal will reach the ballot. There was word late this morning from charter-committee member John Keegan that a last-minute change in the final draft may kill the document. Keegan said this morning a change demanded by big-business lobbyists may prevent more than half of the 15-member charter committee from signing the document. Eight of the 15 charter committee members must sign the charter for it to be included on the ballot for the Nov. 5 general election.

In a meeting earlier this week, taxpayers association board members made plans to send representatives to a charter signing-ceremony this morning at county offices in downtown Phoenix. The representatives were directed to obtain copies of the final draft. Additional copies will then be made and hand-delivered to SCTA board members who are in town. Those members will meet in private Friday morning and again on Tuesday to either endorse or reject the charter.

'As we further evaluate the document, particularly if we oppose it, we will come out with detailed reasons (why we oppose or support it).'

Hawley Atkinson, Sun City Taxpayers Association

The taxpayers association opposed a January ballot question to initiate the charter-drafting process. Voters approved the question and elected 15 people to a committee that has worked since January to write a new form of government for the county.

Taxpayers association leaders decided after the January election to wait until the charter-writing process was complete before passing judgment.

Hawley Atkinson, SCTA president, said after Tuesday's board meeting the association is acting quickly on the final draft because it was the only Sun City organization that opposed efforts to tinker with county government.

"We figure that puts us in a very unusual position as regards to our decision to support or oppose the charter."

In the months before the November election, Atkinson said, the taxpayers association will publicize its reasons for opposing or supporting the charter.

"As we further evaluate the document, particularly if we oppose it, we will come out with detailed reasons (why we oppose or support it).

Taxpayers association board member Werner Chilton suggested Tuesday the board wait to act until the association's attorneys had a chance to review the final draft of the charter.

Atkinson said copies of the final draft would be forwarded to the association's attorneys but that the decision to support or oppose the charter rests with the board.

Some components of the final draft charter include:

- Increasing the number of county supervisorial districts from five to six and adding a board chairman elected at large.

- Preventing the board of supervisors or the board, when acting as the governing body of a special district, from increasing taxes without voter approval. Supervisors that impose a tax increase would forfeit their office.

- Submitting all proposed pay raises for supervisors to voters.

- Non-partisan elections.

- Creating a county board of ethics.

- Requiring annual performance evaluations of all county departments.

- Empowering the county to adopt ordinances and specifying the unincorporated communities for which the ordinances apply.

Charter draft faces uncertain future

Staff report

A scheduled signing ceremony today for the final draft of the Maricopa County charter may instead be a funeral for the proposed new form of government.

Charter committee member John Keegan said this morning the charter may be killed for lack of enough signatures. At least eight of the 15 committee members must sign the document for it to be included on the general-election ballot in November.

"I honestly do not know at this point if the charter's going to be approved. It's at that degree of severity," said Keegan, one of three charter committee members repre-

senting the Northwest Valley.

Committee Chairwoman Joanna Conde of Peoria would not comment this morning about the possibility that the charter could be quashed.

A proposed last-minute change in the final charter draft may prevent some committee members from signing the charter today. Business lobbyists contacted charter committee members over the weekend and demanded that the charter draft include a provision prohibiting the county from enacting ordinances that are more restrictive than state and federal laws. The lobbyists threatened to defeat the charter in the November general election if the provision is not included, Keegan said.

► See Lobbyists demand, A5

► Related story, A3

Lobbyists demand changes

■ From A1

The charter committee voted to consider the provision and some tentative language was drafted during a Monday meeting.

Final consideration of the issue was expected today.

"A lot of us are waiting to see what the outcome ... is to determine if we're going to sign the charter," Keegan said.

Keegan accused lobbyists of trying to manipulate the county.

Lobbyists, he said, "did not participate in the process by and large. They watched this come together over the last six months then, in the end, they try to yank the chain of the members of the committee and say:

'If you don't do exactly what we say, we'll make sure that your efforts are completely wasted. We don't care if you represent the people of Maricopa County. You better make sure you represent the lobbyists.'"

esday, July 3, 1996 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

5 incumbents elected to taxpayers' board

News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Five incumbents were among the six directors elected to the Sun City Taxpayers Association's board of directors, the SCTA announced this morning.

Murray W. Karsten, Hays A. Cape, Jack Salzman and Roby Fretwell were re-elected for three-year terms to the 15-member board of directors.

A fifth incumbent, Raymond A. Rugge, also won re-election but later notified the SCTA by letter that he was resigning, effective today.

SCTA President Howard V. Scott appointed Dana Walker to fill out Rugge's three-year term. Walker currently is an SCTA director who failed to win re-election.

Mildred G. Daniels will be the only

newcomer to the SCTA's board next year. She will serve a one-year term.

The directors will begin their new terms in 1987.

Karsten, who served as judge in the election, reported that 16,664 ballots were sent to members. Voters returned 7,459 ballots, of which 403 were blank and 56 were declared invalid, Karsten wrote in his report.

In other business, the board voted to ask Second Vice President Walter Bush to prepare a report and make recommendations on whether the SCTA should become an intervenor in proposed rate increases by Arizona Public Service Co. (APS) and Southwest Gas Corp.

Bush reported this morning that the Arizona Corporation Commission will

begin a hearing March 13 on proposed rates that would boost APS' income by more than \$200 million annually.

Most of the increase is being sought to pay for APS' share of the cost of building the Unit 2 reactor at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station near Wintersburg, APS officials have said.

No hearing date has been set in the \$45.2-million rate increase sought by Southwest Gas. The company said it needs to raise rates to pay for replacing defective plastic pipe and to make other improvements to the system.

Bush said he is particularly concerned about the Southwest case because the rates will have a bigger impact on consumers than commercial and industrial customers of the natural gas company.

Southwest officials say rates would increase an average of 33 percent for consumers while the largest industrial users would see about a 25.5 percent increase.

The company says costs are higher for delivering gas to consumers and that under existing rates the large business customers subsidize rates for individuals.

SCTA directors also voted to write a letter to Governor-elect Evan Mecham asking that he reappoint Susan Williams in January as executive director of the Residential Utility Consumer Office, the state utility watchdog group.

Williams was appointed to the post by Gov. Bruce Babbitt.

The annual membership meeting was set for 10 a.m. Jan. 22.



MURRAY KARSTEN

SCTA defends water stance

By TIM BAXTER
Staff writer

The Sun City Taxpayers Association lashed out at Citizens Utilities, the CAP Task Force and the Daily News-Sun Tuesday.

The controversy surrounds Central Arizona Project water and what to do with it. Citizens Utilities wants to keep the water allocation and have residents pay for it. The Task Force is considering the best way to bring CAP water to the Sun Cities, if at all. The Daily News-Sun published an article Monday indicating callers to its hot line overwhelmingly supported keeping and paying for CAP water.

And the Taxpayers Association is standing nearly alone, saying Sun City doesn't need the water and should be under no obligation to pay for it.

The Taxpayers Association also says the law and a "used and useful" precedent is on its side.

Taxpayer Association President Mary Charlesworth accused Citizens Utilities of using fear tactics to sway the public.

"They put out things that are scaring the elderly and that's too bad," she said. "Someone started a rumor that in 10 years they'd be standing on Grand Avenue and the water would be coming in a truck."

The Task Force also took a few lumps from board members charging it only exists to justify Citizens' position.

"I refuse to participate in making a plan," Charlesworth said. "They (Citizens Utilities) are trying to get the Task Force to make the plan so they can go to the Corporation Commission and say this is what the people of Sun City want."

"All of a sudden we're not negotiating, we're voting," Charlesworth said, adding the Task Force should have been established to discuss options, not hammer out a deal.

The Task Force is hoping to reach a consensus on what to do with the water late this month or early next month. Charlesworth said she was concerned the voting may be tampered with.

She also said that \$18 a year would not be the true figure for the water.

"I don't want anybody whining to the Taxpayers if it goes badly and they're stuck with an enormous bill."

Board member Jim Fleming said the association needs to consider its next move.

"Obviously we're being flanked," he said. "Now what's our counter-punch?"

The board decided to consult with attorneys about mounting a counter-attack, and resolved to take out an ad in newspapers to promote its position.

The local papers, especially the Daily News-Sun, were attacked by board members who said all sides of the issue had not been presented.

Several board members said the Daily News-Sun hot line poll that showed unanimous support for keeping the water was fixed.

"Nobody's trying to give the people the facts," Charlesworth said.

The charge that the Daily News-Sun would rig its hot line responses is absurd, said Editor Maryanne Leyshon. "For years, we have initiated the hot line to gauge our readers' opinions on various issues affecting their communities. We believe the hot line poll, though totally unscientific in nature, serves as a springboard for discussion and debate and perhaps resolution of conflict. Obviously it served its purpose and offered the Taxpayers an open forum for the group's dissenting opinion."