

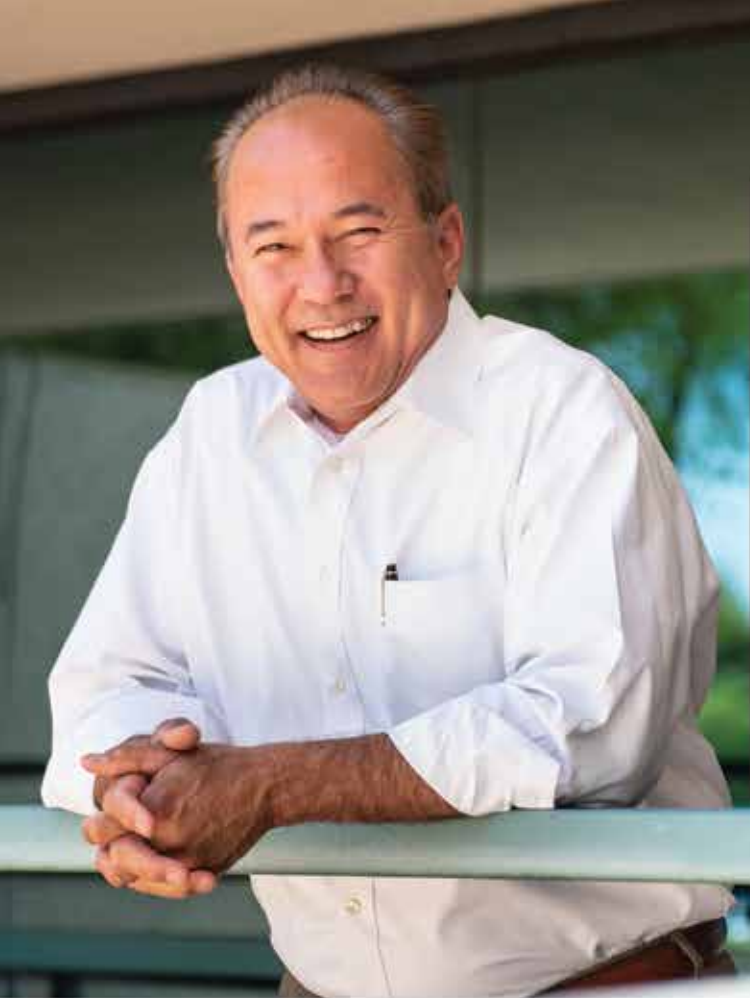


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WEST VALLEY BOASTS FRESH NEW

Region's professional services gain momentum in attracting new business, Class A office space and tech startups

By ERIN THORBURN

Movies such as “My Fair Lady,” “Grease,” “Can’t Buy Me Love,” and “Clueless,” all share the common theme of misunderstood perceptions. In some cases, central characters were perhaps unfairly branded. In other instances, protagonists were presented with a catalyst to ultimately help them become who they were always meant to be. In any case, the viewer gets to witness a dramatic transformation. A similar plot has been unfolding in West Valley.

Long perceived as a manufacturing distribution hub, the West Valley has transformed into a progressive, competitive, and lucrative hotspot of burgeoning innovation, ready-made professional talent and quality of life perfectly suited for those seeking a small-town feel with the amenities of a big city.

“Our primary challenge in the West Valley for several years has been an outdated perception issue about our demographics and quality of life,” says Jeanine Jerkovic, economic development director for the City of Surprise. “This is beginning to change the more that people continue to move to the West Valley and experience the youth and vibrancy for themselves.”

TEAM APPROACH

The change in perception of the West Valley is also shifting thanks to the aggressive work of WESTMARC, in collaboration with West Valley public and private partnerships, combined with city-

led synchronicity. These local forces have taken the challenges of a much overdue makeover head on. CBRE, for example, recently partnered with WESTMARC to create a joint-marketing piece to help eliminate antiquated ideas surrounding the West Valley.

The result — concrete statistics that reveal the current economic opportunities, household earning potential and labor supply advantages. For example, one of the tired branding misconceptions about the West Valley has been a lack of professional services labor. Now, with proof that 35 percent of Metro Phoenix’s healthcare workers, 32 percent of finance and insurance workers, and 35,000 computer science and IT programming laborers reside in the West Valley, dated perceptions are diminishing.

To help the West Valley progress further in her modern makeover, there’s still more work to be done.

“We need to focus on attracting office space construction,” says Sintra Hoffman, WESTMARC’s president and CEO. “We need to have existing Class A office space to step up our game in attracting users in the areas where we already have the workforce to support them.”

According to Hoffman, research demonstrates that the West Valley needs more build to suite Class A product. “Companies want existing office space, so from an economic development standpoint, we need to mitigate the risk for developers in order to make the investment in office space.”



LOOK

FLITE Goodyear: A 27-by-33 mural of a Corsair engine pays homage to the history of the FLITE Goodyear. In addition to being the location where Goodyear blimps were manufactured at one time, the Corsair is one of the planes that was worked on at FLITE Goodyear. *(Mike Mertes, AZ Big Media)*



IN THE WORKS

Projects such as the recently slated Goodyear Civic Square located north of McDowell Road and west of Harkins Theater near 150th Drive are a step in the right direction. With plans to include several features — including a city hall, library, two-acre park and gathering place, and an upscale Class A office complex — the Goodyear Civic Square is exactly what the West Valley needs to attract more users.

“This is an important milestone for the city’s future growth,” said Lori Gary, Goodyear’s economic development director. “Class A office space is lacking in the West Valley, limiting our ability to vie for these desirable office projects. Goodyear will now be able to compete to attract high-end office users, which will bring even more high-quality jobs to the area.”

In addition to shovel-ready office space, the West Valley needs startup investors to level-up, according to Ron Babich, CEO and founder of EasyVoice Voice Platform and chairperson of the West Valley Innovation Alliance.

“We see interest from several tech startups interested in establishing roots in the West Valley,” Bacich says, “but we really need an incubator program to attract investors.”

That’s where entities like the West Valley Innovation Alliance (WVIA) and AZ TechCelerator (City of Surprise) have stepped in. Together, with support from local higher education entities, they advocate for more opportunities for growing West Valley professional talent,

and fewer reasons for them to have to commute to East Valley jobs.

As Babich humorously, but accurately puts it, “The West Valley may have 99 problems, but tech resources ain’t one. We have the talent and 40 percent of the workforce,” he says, “but we need to continue to build more faith in the system for investors.”

REMARKABLE RESOURCES

Part of eliciting faith is revealing additional resources above and beyond a solid available workforce.

“The AZ TechCelerator launched 10 years ago as a creative reuse of the City of Surprise former City Hall facility,” says Jerkovic. “It was a different time economically in Arizona then, and the team in Surprise knew we had to energize our own local economy by helping start-up companies and ensure a long-term economic future.”

From there, Jerkovic and her City of Surprise cohorts pivoted their economic development strategy from a primary focus on attracting larger corporate investments to a more balanced one, focused on building a strong local entrepreneurship and small business ecosystem.

The key, Babich says, “is more awareness of the tech the West Valley already has.”

Babich provides examples which include:

- EasyVoice: Makers of voice software for hands-free time sheets in all industries and medical patient management in healthcare.
- InstantHandz: Software that helps

neighbors connect jobs to assist other neighbors.

- LeadFuze: Software that helps businesses find new leads.
- RTA Fleet Management: Fleet management software.
- Promineo Tech: World-class education and student experience through quality programs, service focused interactions and working to make skills in technology available, accessible, and affordable to everyone.
- Savant WMS: Warehouse management software.
- Bravo Pay: Cashless tipping app for mobile devices.

“The West Valley is essentially a nearly-untapped workforce mega-center for the region, anchored by several growing universities such as Ottawa and Grand Canyon Universities as well as vocational, CTE programs at West-MEC, Estrella Mountain Community College, Rio Salado and Dysart Unified School District,” Jerkovic says. “With several major data centers coming online in the West Valley, tech businesses can also be reassured that their data storage, fiber and telecom needs will be met.”

In fact, AZ TechCelerator is currently helping global companies launch and is the only innovation hub in Arizona to receive the International Business Incubation Association “Soft Landing” designation, which is only one of 31 worldwide.

It’s not simply West Valley startups, that need nurturing. “We have to take tech seriously. One of the things that I learned as part of growing a region infrastructure, is that technology is an essential requirement,” Babich explains.

As more office space, tech startups, FinTech, healthcare and additional professional services migrate West, they’ll be happy to know they have reached the West Valley in the prime of her makeover — fresh-faced and ready to take on new adventures. **AB**



Ron Babich



Lori Gary



Sintra Hoffman



Jeanine Jerkovic

WEST VALLEY’S KEY INDUSTRIES

HEALTHCARE
1,412 businesses,
46,300 employees

WAREHOUSE AND DISTRIBUTION
910 businesses,
42,140 employees

MANUFACTURING
646 businesses,
31,320 employees

FINANCE
559 businesses,
22,070 employees

AEROSPACE
83 businesses,
5,230 employees

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
71 businesses,
3,360 employees

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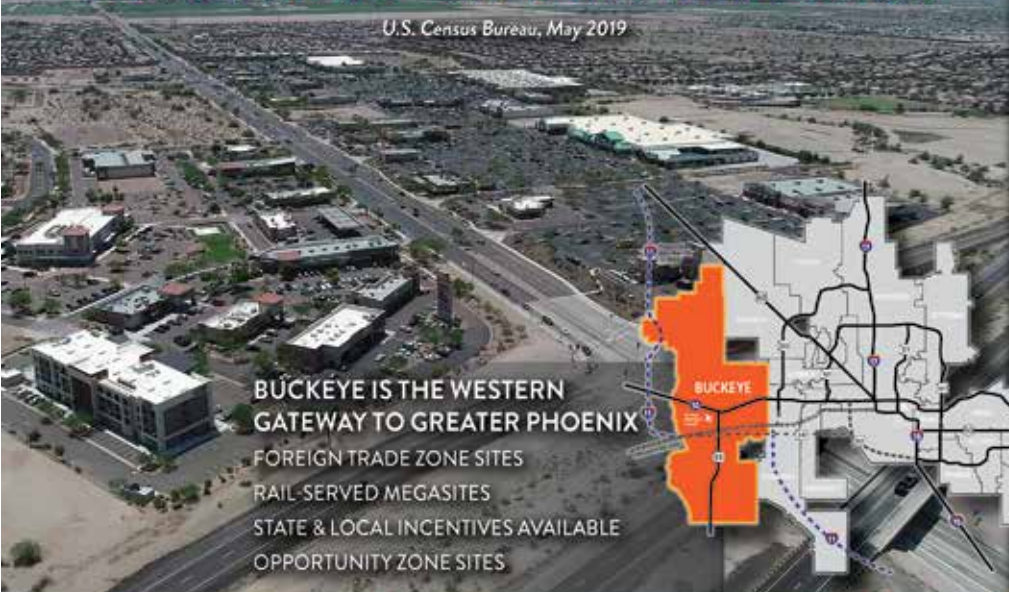
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Mother of **REINVENTION**

West Valley redefines itself as a catalyst for innovation, economic growth, and a better quality of life

By ERIN THORBURN

Long, long ago in a region many Phoenicians perceived as far, far away, the West Valley was considered ... well, perhaps in need of some polish. But it didn't take a rebellion to change this perception. It took revitalization, rebranding and relaying a more accurate, updated story.

Today, the West Valley story involves new locales such as Microsoft, AKOS, and Vantage data centers, innovative healthcare

options, new restaurants, vibrant entertainment districts and more.

ONE-OFF STORIES FROM THE WEST

Smart movie franchises do more than capitalize on one story. They offer viewers one-offs, spin-offs, and mini-stories to illustrate a more complex narrative while also attracting interest. Storytellers like WESTMARC, CBRE and MAG are helping to re-shape perspectives on economic

growth, talented workforce, rising household incomes and quality of life in the West Valley.

There are also plenty of one-off stories to share, like those of Farmers Insurance, which selected a West Valley location close to the North Peoria commute shed.

"A variety of factors convinced us that the West Valley, which is near our new facility, is a vibrant, growing area that could accommodate the housing,



QUALITY OF LIFE: “Park West Shopping Center is an incredible lifestyle shopping center that offers friends and families amazing retail, dining, and entertainment options,” says Peoria Mayor Cathy Carlat. New tenants at the red-hot entertainment destination in Peoria include Cold Beers & Cheeseburgers, Hash Kitchen, The Sicilian Butcher, The Sicilian Baker Cannoli Bar & Market, Jalapeno Inferno, Pita Jungle, FOREVER 21, Koi Poke, Orange Theory Fitness and Creamistry. *(Provided rendering)*



Cathy Carlat



Pat Feeney



Sintra Hoffman

shopping, educational and recreational needs of our people, not just for today, but also as we grow and evolve,” says Deborah West, director of Farmers Direct Services, “The West Valley is a strong and growing community with economic vitality, entertainment opportunities and a diverse workforce, making it an attractive area.”

There are many common themes in why companies like Farmers Insurance, Vantage Data, Stream Data Center, Microsoft, REI, Amazon and other nationally-recognized companies have established — or are establishing — locations in and near the West Valley.

FIRST, THERE IS THE TALENT: 35 percent of Metro Phoenix’s healthcare talent, 32 percent of finance and insurance labor, and 33 percent of manufacturing workers already reside in the West Valley are ready

and happy to eliminate their commutes to other areas of the Valley.

SECOND, THERE IS THE BUYING POWER: The average household income in the West Valley currently hovers around \$68,225, with many areas scattered throughout the region where the average household income exceeds \$80,000.

THIRD, THERE IS THE QUALITY OF LIFE: Westgate Entertainment District, State Farm Stadium, Gila River Arena, five Major League Baseball spring training facilities, award-winning golf course, Topgolf, Desert Diamond West Valley Casino, numerous local parks and hiking trails, and much more create a vibrant quality of life in the West Valley.

FOURTH, THERE ARE THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: A-rated K-12 and post-secondary schools, ASU West, Grand

Canyon University, Ottawa University, Midwestern University, Glendale Community College, Estrella Community College and West-MEC are training a skilled workforce for jobs that may not even exist yet.

And, while these four pillars represent key areas of conveying the modern West Valley story, there is yet more to the plot. The West Valley consistently seeks to revitalize and expand its offerings in entertainment, retail, and recreation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPINOFF

“Park West is an incredible lifestyle shopping center that offers friends and families amazing retail, dining, and entertainment options,” says Peoria Mayor Cathy Carlat. “Commercial Investment Real Estate (CIRE) Equity’s recent \$4

WESTMARC

million investment in upgrades and new amenities at Park West, and the incredible new tenants that have already opened their doors, demonstrate the success of our healthy and prosperous local economies, and I'm thrilled to see Park West continue to flourish as a premier Peoria shopping and entertainment destination."

"The West Valley, along the Loop 101, has really come into its own as an entertainment attraction," adds Sintra Hoffman, WESTMARC president and CEO. "This is where our West Valley residents go to have fun."

The addition of the now open, Desert Diamond Casino in Glendale's Westgate Entertainment District boasts a full-scale casino featuring a 75,000 square-foot gaming floor with the addition of new restaurants and retail.

There's also notable activity taking place with PV303, as more occupants solidify space, creating a conglomerate of e-commerce, clothing manufacturing, food and beverage, cold storage, third-party logistics (3PL), transportation, aerospace and data center industries.

"Activity continues to be strong, and we believe the diversity in companies at PV303 adds to the viability of the industrial market in the West Valley," says Pat Feeney, SIOR, senior vice president of CBRE. "PV303 has attracted a dynamic mix of corporate users — many of which are household names like UPS, REI, Boeing and Ball Corporation, to name a few."

"A number of these companies have planted their flags in the ground and purchased the buildings they occupy," Feeney adds, "which I think says a lot about their confidence in the area and their ability to attract and retain local labor. It also helps to attract other businesses to the area that want to be neighbors with nationally and globally recognized tenants."

A CONTINUING AND CAPTIVATING FRANCHISE

While revitalization and improvement of existing space continue to be a major aspect of the West Valley story, new offerings continue to be a catalyst for growth as well.

Entertainment and recreation additions such as the Goodyear Civic Square at



INDUSTRIAL HOT SPOT: "We believe the diversity in companies at PV303 adds to the viability of the industrial market in the West Valley," says Pat Feeney, senior vice president of CBRE. "PV303 has attracted a dynamic mix of corporate users — many of which are household names like UPS (pictured), REI, Boeing and Ball Corporation, to name a few." (Provided photo)

Estrella Falls, slated for completion by summer of 2020, is a prime example. The new community gathering spot will serve as a center for festivals, concerts and parades, as well as inviting future development of new restaurants, retail and entertainment.

"The West Valley Pipeline (Workforce Development Implementation Strategy) affirmed what West Valley leaders have long known — our region is home to highly educated and skilled professionals

looking for quality employment and head of household jobs close to home," Carlat says. "Couple this with a warm, stable climate, access to amazing amenities, diverse housing options, and quality education, and it shows our region has a lot to offer. As we continue efforts to attract new businesses and targeted industries, we remain focused on communicating the very best of who we are, to ensure prospective employers recognize what we already know—the West Valley is the place to be." **AB**

DATA CENTER HOT SPOT

It's been a good year for Goodyear. The city has landed three major data center projects already in 2019. Here's a look at the plans:

- Vantage Data Centers acquired 50 acres of land in Goodyear to build a hyperscale data center campus, featuring 1 million square feet of data centers and 160 megawatts of capacity.
- Compass Datacenters acquired more than 200 acres of land in Goodyear, where it has capacity to build up to 350 megawatts of data center capacity.
- Stream Data Centers acquired land for a major data center campus in Goodyear and marks Stream's entry into the Phoenix market. Stream has bought 157 acres of land, which includes an existing structure that will be converted into a 418,000 square foot data center with up to 50 megawatts of power.



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Buckeye Campus
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West-MEC Southwest Campus
500 North Verrado Way in Buckeye



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A MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Main Campus
6000 W Olive Ave in Glendale

GCC North Campus
5727 W Happy Valley Rd in Phoenix



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SCHOOL TIES

West Valley is a class act when it comes to educational opportunities for residents

By ERIN THORBURN

The West Valley has no shortage of educational opportunities. In fact, it's because of the close-knit educational collaboration among K-12 and secondary schools, community colleges and trade schools, and extending to abundant higher education options that have helped make the West Valley an economic success story. And, these educational entities continue to yield impressive and abundant talent for varying industries.

"ASU has partnered with the community colleges to create pathways to ensure seamless transitions for students," says Bobbi Magdaleno, executive director of government and community engagement for Arizona State University West Campus. "We have 30 percent growth in freshmen year-over-year in our largest college on campus, the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences."

In the professional services realm, ASU West offers strong degree programs in forensic science and forensic psychology, with a solid combination of math along with the psychology and behavioral analysis pieces.

"Our cybersecurity degrees/certificate contribute to a workforce that has a strong career outlook with high projected growth," Magdaleno says.

Maricopa Community Colleges are collectively helping to grow the West Valley's existing 35 percent of Metro Phoenix's healthcare workers by offering 40 healthcare programs, in addition to several other professional services degree paths.

Midwestern University, Grand Canyon University, Estrella Community College and a newer educational resident — Ottawa University Arizona (OUAZ) — are among other collegiate options for West Valley residents.

In fact, OUAZ began the 2018-2019 academic year with a 42 percent increase in enrollment over the prior year, with a total enrollment of 618.

"We are thrilled with the response to our unique higher educational offerings at our new campus in Surprise," said Dr. Kevin Eichner, chancellor of Ottawa University. "Our approach

to the development of the whole person is being extremely well received, and we are excited about the impact of our programs such as our FlexTerm calendar, Spirit life opportunities, Personal Growth Days and extensive and rigorous academic curriculum."

"The West Valley has tremendous post-secondary opportunities," says WESTMARC president and CEO Sintra Hoffman.

"We are definitely moving the needle.

We have more private and public school choices than ever before.

In the Surprise area, we have Ottawa University, Huntington University in Peoria, Franklin Pierce and Columbia in Goodyear. As far as upping educational options,

ASU, Grand Canyon and our West Valley community colleges are absolutely knocking it out of the park." **AB**



Kevin Eichner



Bobbi Magdaleno



WEST VALLEY educational institutions

PUBLIC

ASU West Campus
NAU at Glendale
NAU at Estrella Mountain
NAU at North Valley

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Estrella Mountain Community College
Estrella Mountain Community College-Buckeye
Educational Center
Glendale Community College
Phoenix College
Rio Salado Community College

CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Arizona Automotive Institute
Universal Technical Institute
West-MEC campuses
• Central Campus
• Northeast Campus
• Southwest Campus
• Northwest Campus
• Diesel Campus
• Start@WEST-MEC

PRIVATE

Arizona College
Carrington College
Columbia College
DeVry University
Embry Riddle
Franklin Pierce University
Grand Canyon University
Huntington University
Midwestern University
Ottawa University
University of Phoenix
Webster University

WEST VALLEY student enrollment (Fall 2018)

Grand Canyon University: 20,500	Arizona State University, West: 4,445
Glendale Community College: 17,942	West Valley Rio Salado College: 2,752
Estrella Mountain Community College: 9,976	Ottawa University 1,434

RECORD YEAR: Grand Canyon University's platinum year was also the biggest and best in its 70-year history, as the university conferred a record 25,232 degrees for its traditional-aged and working adult students. *(Provided photo)*



TRAINING

Luke AFB not only prepares the world's best fighter pilots, it's building the workforce of the future

By ERIN THORBURN


Residents of the West Valley, often hear “the sounds of freedom” emanating from above. The audible and visible signs of F-35 training missions represent just part of the ongoing legacy of Luke Air Force Base. In addition to being home to F-35s, Luke AFB also houses F-16s, 4,300 active military personnel, 1,300 reserves, and 1,300 civilians. Together, the moving parts of Luke AFB contribute a game-changing \$2.4 billion in annual economic impact to the local community — the economic impact equivalent of hosting five Super Bowls a year.

“For over 70 years, Luke has trained the world’s greatest fighter pilots and combat-ready airmen,” says Brigadier General Todd Canterbury. “As we build to hosting 144 of the world’s most advanced

fighters, the F-35, Luke will continue this legacy for years to come. We look forward to continuing to grow with the West Valley.”

While many are aware of the tremendous economic impact of Luke AFB, perhaps less highlighted, is the gaining traction of Luke AFB’s talented transitioning military. While Luke has — and continues to — pump dollars into the West Valley, it’s also part of a valuable, skilled workforce pipeline.

“More than 500 military members transition from Luke Air Force Base annually,” explains Steve Yamamori, president and CEO of the Reveille Foundation. “And, depending on opportunities for employment, roughly 50 percent would consider staying in the West Valley.”



REGION TAKES OFF: An F-35 Lightning II takes off from Luke Air Force Base, (Photo by: U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Pedro Mota)

GROUND

TALENTED TRANSITIONERS

Part of why talented transitioning military remain in the West Valley is attributed to government, municipal, and public support.

“I remember going out to Luke Air Force Base as a young boy,” says Glendale Mayor Jerry P. Weiers. I was mesmerized by the aircraft and the entire operation, and I am extremely proud that it has grown into the world’s largest Air Force base right here in Glendale. For decades, Luke Air Force Base has trained our country’s greatest fighter pilots and has also welcomed foreign partners like Norway, Italy, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, and others.”

In fact, Luke AFB currently trains 75 percent of the world’s F-35 pilots. This means the West Valley is in a unique position to showcase itself to a broad audience. During their training, international military pilots plant temporary roots all over the West Valley, settling in communities like Estrella Mountain Ranch, Vistancia, and Verrado, among others.

“The ability to train with our allied partners from around the

world helps build closer relationships with potential coalition partners in future conflicts around the world,” says James “Rusty” Mitchell, Luke Air Force Base’s director of its Community Initiatives Team. “Having partner families in our community exposes them to the unbelievable support that surrounds the men and women at Luke AFB. It also helps our families become more familiar with the Partner Nation’s customs and courtesies that would otherwise not be possible.”

And, while basing training for the F-35 — the nation’s newest and most advanced weapon system — at Luke, it ensures the continued economic contributions of Luke AFB for the next 50 years. That also means the prospect of a critical mass of talented Luke AFB military members transitioning into the West Valley Workforce remains positive.

ADDED INCENTIVE?

Despite the optimistic expectations that 50 percent of the talent will remain in the West Valley after aging out of service at

Luke AFB, many West Valley economic developers, along with city, community, and government leaders continue to ask: “Can we do more?”

What can be done moving forward to entice Luke AFB transitioning military to remain in the West Valley?

“We did a survey for our airmen and the four prominent things that came up were job opportunities, education, cost of living, and relationships,” says Colonel Robert A. Sylvester, commander of the 56th Mission Support Group at Luke Air Force Base.

“Transitioning out of the military can be a difficult process,” Yamamori says. “Individuals are coming from an environment that directs them where to go and what to do for their entire careers and suddenly, they are expected to be self-starters and know how to navigate the community.”

“We have many opportunities to let our airmen know what’s available locally,” Sylvester adds. “They include Luke Air Force Base Airman & Family Readiness Center Employment Hub Facebook page, with over 600 followers, averaging six job

posts a week; several job fairs with 72 employers and five public agencies; a job bank with 800 members; and twice-monthly employer panels with transitional assistance.”

Of the ad hoc hiring opportunities available, Sylvester points to Chewey, Lyft, Border Patrol, USAA, Kingman PD, Discover, Boeing, SHRM, Lockheed and Amazon that have become amazing employers to former military members.

Additional resources include the Reveille Foundation, which helps to increase both awareness and opportunity.

“Reveille’s vision is to create better, faster pathways to success for all underserved populations, no matter where they begin their journey,” Yamamori says. “Our goal is to take the wonderful work that is being done at the West Valley Military and Veteran Success Center and bring these resources throughout Maricopa County.”

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to programs and foundations that bridge the gap between military service and the civilian workforce, continued community and government support, combined with incentives,



“For over 70 years, Luke has trained the world’s greatest fighter pilots and combat-ready airmen,” says Brigadier General Todd Canterbury. “As we build to hosting 144 of the world’s most advanced fighters, the F-35, Luke will continue this legacy for years to come. We look forward to continuing to grow with West Valley.”

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Roberta (Bobbi) Magdaleno
Executive director, ASU
Government and Community
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- U.S. News & World Report 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019



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to **thrive**



Todd Canterbury



James "Rusty" Mitchell



Robert A. Sylvester



Jerry P. Weiers



Steve Yamamori

offer additional reasons to keep exciting military personnel in the West Valley.

"The West Valley and the state are very welcoming to military personnel, both still serving as well as those that are ready to transition from the military life to the civilian workforce," Mitchell says. "Led by Gov. Doug Ducey, the elected officials of Arizona have made it very clear that the state welcomes military personnel and their families to remain as residents. The Legislature has pursued tax incentives to further attract military personnel and make it easier to call Arizona home."

While the talent emerging from Luke is largely comprised of trained pilots and maintainers primed for work in airlines and engineering positions — such as those available at Lockheed

Martin — the potential to fill in additional employment needs is plentiful.

For their part, West Valley economic developers and partnerships — such as those cultivated in WESTMARC — are aggressively continuing to tempt employers who could benefit from the talent pool at Luke AFB and persuade them to plant roots in Maricopa County.

"Everyday acknowledgment of the sacrifices made by the military personnel stationed in Arizona is very impactful," Mitchell says. "Every airman in today's Air Force joined knowing that that they were going to be placed 'in harm's way,' and yet they raised their hand to serve. A pat on the back and a simple thank you goes a long way." **AB**

KEY EMPLOYERS IN THE WEST VALLEY

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE
7,840

BANNER HEALTH
7,090

AMAZON
5,880

AMERICAN EXPRESS
3,890

**GRAND CANYON
UNIVERSITY**
2,800

**PINNACLE WEST
CAPITAL CORP.**
2,510

**ABRAZO COMMUNITY
HEALTH NETWORK**
2,070

PETSMART
2,000

**JBS PACKERLAND
TOLLESON**
1,540

MARSHALLS
1,480

HONORHEALTH
1,400

**SWIFT
TRANSPORTATION**
1,390

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1,340

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STRENGTHS AND

West Valley packs pipeline of ready-made finance and insurance workforce talent



By ERIN THORBURN

Honey bees typically travel 1.3 miles to collect the necessary resources to bring back to the bee hive. For the last few decades, the majority of West Valley finance and insurance workers have had to commute significantly farther than the average honey bee. Commuting to other areas of the Valley has historically been accepted as a byproduct of living in the West Valley. With 34 percent of professional finance and insurance workers in Maricopa County specifically residing in the West Valley, however, is shattering this dated perception. With a hive of talent ready to fly, it's the perfect time for financial and insurance institutions to build a colony and invest in the West.

WESTMARC's "West Valley Pipeline" regional workforce development strategy continues to demonstrate a region that contains a skilled and talented workforce—with finance and insurance as one of the leading sectors.

"We just partnered on a joint marketing piece with CBRE that goes into detail about our workforce, demonstrating a robust talent base in finance and insurance," explains Sintra Hoffman, WESTMARC president. The collaborative marketing efforts of CBRE and WESTMARC have revealed invaluable data for financial and insurance companies ready to relocate or expand.

"CBRE tracked 23 companies that publicly announced a new

OPPORTUNITIES



COMPANIES EXPANDING IN THE WEST VALLEY

Farmers Insurance, Phoenix	750
Andersen Corporation, Goodyear	415
Conair, Glendale	300
Southwest Products Corporation, Surprise	265
XPO Logistics, Goodyear	150
Alaska USA Federal Credit Union, Glendale	136
Amazon, Goodyear	130
Tyr Tactical, Peoria	125
Carvana, Tolleson	100
KPS Global, Goodyear	85
Bravada Yachts, Tolleson	57
HonorHealth, Peoria	57

NEW JOBS 2,570

Sources: CBRE Research, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Arizona Commerce Authority



Ron Castro



**Teresa Leyba
Ruiz**



Jessica Morin

“We are in the midst of enormous change that will affect our current and future workforce.”

— Teresa Leyba Ruiz

or expanding location since 2018 in the West Valley,” says Jessica Morin, CBRE Pacific Southwest Division’s senior research analyst, “that equals upwards of 4,000 new jobs. Most of these identified users are clustered in West Phoenix, Goodyear, Surprise and Tolleson.”

So where does this leave the West Valley? In a prime position. Here’s why, according to Morin: “Competition for labor has significantly increased, and finance and insurance companies may increasingly look to locate away from their competition, especially closer to the labor in the West Valley,” she says.

In addition to the competitive 34 percent ready-made talent residing in the West Valley, finance and insurance graduates from Grand Canyon University, ASU West Campus and the Maricopa Community College system have the potential to increase this substantial workforce even more.

“The West Valley is fortunate to have two community colleges, a major public university as well as two major private universities,” says Teresa Leyba Ruiz, Glendale Community College’s president. “It’s the responsibility of the educational institutions to ensure a talented workforce, that is flexible and adaptable, and is ready to contribute to the economic success of corporations and the community.”

And, while educational partnerships continue to feed the finance and insurance employee supply chain, the antiquated perceptions of the West Valley are changing.

“The West Valley has a somewhat unique hurdle in public perception,” Morin says. “People put the West Valley in a box, assuming it’s solely a distribution and healthcare market. While these uses have a significant footprint, the labor in the West Valley support professional and business service users, such as finance and insurance.”

In addition to having the aid of education, community and business partnerships, technological advancements have fueled favor to the West Valley as a viable hotspot for finance and insurance economic development opportunities.

“We are in the midst of enormous change that will affect our current and future workforce,” Ruiz says. “The change has a lot to do with the rapidly changing technological power of computers and advancing systems that will impact financial and insurance institutions, specifically.”

“From my perspective as the vice president of BNC bank, if you have a smartphone you can be a customer of our bank. We don’t have to be in close geographic proximity to serve customers across the valley,” says Ron Castro, BNC National Bank’s vice president. “If a bank in Glendale can operate that way, other banks can too—those downtown and in the East Valley—can relocate or expand here.”

With a firm foundation of finance and insurance talent available and waiting for a daily honey-bee commute, rather than I-10 east trek, what needs to happen to attract more employers to create a colony?

“The West Valley needs a pioneer that understands the strengths and opportunities of the West Valley region, and who is willing to establish a campus,” Morin says. “Once that occurs, I believe others will follow in their lead and the West Valley will establish itself as a finance and insurance hub.”

“We have quality of life, affordable housing, a beautiful and functional infrastructure of new highways,” Castro adds. “The only thing holding us back is the investment in office space and building to bring more opportunities to the West Valley.” **AB**

COMPANIES THAT ARE NEW TO THE WEST VALLEY

Chewy, Goodyear	700
SK Food Group, Tolleson	550
UPS, Goodyear	500
AKOS Medical Campus, Avondale	400
Huhtamaki North America, Goodyear	300
IRIS USA, Surprise	200
Aldi, Goodyear	132
Ball Corporation, Goodyear	130
Trimaco, Surprise	110
The Vitamin Shoppe, Avondale	110
Cardinal IG, Buckeye	100
Ring, Glendale	100
SeaCa Packaging, Surprise	65
IAC Industries, Goodyear	55

NEW JOBS 3,452

Sources: CBRE Research, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Arizona Commerce Authority

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