



WESTMARC

Western Maricopa Coalition

2014





a region RISES

WESTMARC creates united front to help West Valley cities capitalize economically on area's assets By ERIC JAY TOLL

You can't just say you 'support regionalism,' you have to believe it." Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott is talking about attitude in the West Valley.

Thirty minutes earlier in a separate conversation, Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord made nearly the same comment. "We believe in regionalism and we put it into practice," she says. "On this side of the Valley, it's not just words, it's real."

District 5 Maricopa County Supervisor, Clint Hickman, points out the window of his 10th floor office. "They place us so when supervisors look out the window, we're looking at our district," he said. Gazing across West Phoenix, the dome of University of Phoenix stadium is clearly visible in front of the White Tank Mountains. "I was born and raised in the West Valley," he continues. "As a business owner, a public servant, and West Valley native, I believe we're stronger for working together."

Talk to any business leader about the West Valley, and the words heard are "regionalism," "working together" and "diversity." Maricopa County districts 4 and 5, and 15 communities from

Surprise to Gila Bend, Wickenburg to Phoenix are starting to flex economic development muscle. When the synergies are totaled, the sum is the United Cities of West Valley.

THE PAST NOT PREDICTIVE OF FUTURE

The spirit of cooperation west of Interstate 17 is a break from history. As recently as a decade ago, West Valley cities were clawing for territory, car dealers, and the next power center. Tens of thousands of families were driving to qualify for affordable homes popping up in dozens of sprawling tracts. Politically, there may as well have been walls running down city limit lines.

Then came the recession. The economic downturn had a chilling impact on the West Valley. Faced with abandoned neighborhoods, empty strip centers and vacant warehouses, municipal revenue streams dribbled to nothingness. What was the norm wasn't working.

The change started quietly. "It all began shifting over the past three to four years," recounts Lana Mook, mayor in El Mirage. "We, the area's mayors and business leaders, realized we would be a lot stronger working together than working separately."

WESTMARC CREATES A NEW ATTITUDE

The challenge was bringing together the region's assets and promoting the area. The catalyst had been sitting there since 1990. The Western Maricopa Coalition (WESTMARC) was the one place where mayors, businesses and public officials connected. In 2011, the WESTMARC board appointed a former Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) senior vice president to the role of president and chief operating officer. Michelle Rider took the reins of an old organization with a new charge.

The regional development organization took on a new focus. Its board of directors and Rider decided to leave business recruitment to organizations like GPEC, Arizona Commerce Authority and individual cities' economic development departments.

"We saw our role as creating a strong environment in which business can flourish," she explains. "We focus on three priorities. Our efforts are to promote the West Valley, enhance economic development and increase member value. We partner with GPEC and Arizona Commerce; they have the recruitment resources. We need to ensure when a business comes knocking on our door, we're ready."

CHANGING THE PERCEPTION

"Let's say there are a lot of misunderstandings about the West Valley outside the West Valley," muses Mayor Lord. "Many of those misunderstandings are because people's only experience with the Valley is sitting in traffic on I-10 when returning from California. They haven't stopped here to explore."

"I drive to work in the morning between two of the most beautiful mountain ranges in the state," Supervisor Hickman says. "I look at the vast expanses of open land, the many homes, the business clusters we have, and realize, there's a lot to offer."

Site selection consultants look at many factors before plopping a business into a market. Key among those are similar firms, transportation and workforce. The West Valley has a well-kept secret. It is home to significant diversity in the three key siting factors. The region is home to a diverse collection of business sectors.

Mayor Wolcott lists the base: "Manufacturing and logistics, healthcare, advanced business services, aerospace and renewable energy businesses are located all over the region. We have the most diverse business and population base in the state."

There's another asset: Maricopa County west of I-17 has vast tracts of undeveloped, single ownership land.

"We learned from the rapid development in the East Valley," explains Mayor Lord. "The cities in the West Valley have jealously guarded industrial land, Luke Air Force Base and our transportation corridors."

WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION

One of the region's major corridors has a significant cheerleader. Mayor Wolcott has pressed for improvements to Grand Avenue since she first took office. "This is a multimodal corridor that's unique to the West Valley," she says. "No other road in the state is like this. It connects ten cities and runs from the Capitol to Wickenburg; essentially, it runs all the way to Las Vegas."

"The West Valley has an extraordinary mix of transportation modes," echoes Mayor Mook. "We have both (Union Pacific) and (Burlington Northern) rail roads, a collection of spurs, (Loop) 303, I-10 and some day, I-11."

The biggest asset in the region is its workforce. "Goodyear is the sixth fastest growing city in the United States," Mayor Lord says with pride.

The rest of the West Valley is growing rapidly. In 2010, the region was home to 39 percent of the County's population, according to the Maricopa Association of Governments. By 2040, MAG says the share will climb to 46 percent for the region.

"Every work day you can almost feel the land tilt," says Mayor Wolcott. "The roads are filled with our residents driving out of our region to go to work. We have a significant, well-educated workforce who'd rather work closer to home."

More than half the Northwest Valley's workforce commutes into Deer Valley, Central Phoenix and the Scottsdale Airpark.

"We want our residents to stay closer to home, and we're working as a region to make that happen," Mayor Lord is emphatic about cutting the commutes.

Manufacturing, medicine, aerospace, renewable energy and advanced business services. These are the roots of the "West muscle" promoted by WESTMARC.

Rider is passionate about all of this. "We're bringing our members together as a powerful force to make these assets known. There's a story to tell, and we're getting the word out."

AB



Clint Hickman



Georgia Lord



Lana Mook



Michelle Rider



Sharon Wolcott

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West side glory

Quality of life makes West Valley an attractive location for businesses By ERIC JAY TOLL

When my husband and I first moved to Arizona, we looked around the Valley and just fell in love with Goodyear,” says Georgia Lord, reminiscing about coming west, a long time before Goodyear voters entrusted her with the role of mayor.

“I was born and raised in the West Valley,” Maricopa County Supervisor Clint Hickman says about his home. “This is where I do business today. With the county, I have a role requiring me to join my neighbors and drive (Interstate)-10 to get downtown. When I get home at the end of the day and see the sun set behind the White Tanks, it reminds me why I call the West Valley home.”

“This is a beautiful and affordable place for people to live,” says Lana Wood, talking now about living in the region and not in her role as mayor of El Mirage. “We have so much recreation, so many beautiful spaces, and now a lot of things to do.

Two Arizona professional teams call the West Valley home. Every spring, eight of the 14 major league baseball teams train in the West Valley. Thousands of West Valleyites play in the multitude of sports fields throughout the region or swim and boat in Lake Pleasant.

The West Valley drew international attention when Cancer Treatment Centers of America opened its Western Region headquarters in Goodyear. In the few years the medical center has been in place, it has expanded once, is now the CTCA data center headquarters and has a third expansion on the boards.

Banner Estrella Hospital in West Phoenix built a new patient tower. Abrazo West Valley Hospital, Goodyear, just topped 700 employees after its most recent enhancements. Just weeks ago, Dignity Health Care opened the first phase of its new Glendale Westgate hospital. In Surprise, Cobalt Medical Treatment is joint venturing with the city to build a 50,000-square-foot brain-injury center.

The West Valley Arts Council is expanding with gallery space and a new headquarters in the original Surprise townsite. The organization funds and runs dozens of events and activities throughout the year from art exhibitions to live theatre to children’s drama camps all over the region.

“People are surprised when I tell them how different the West Valley really is from their impressions,” says Mayor Lord. “Then I find out, they’ve never been here to really see what we have to offer.”

It’s the quality of life offerings that are feeding consistent population growth. The U.S. Census Bureau says Goodyear is the sixth fastest growing community in the U.S. MAG says that 46 percent of the county’s population will call the region home by the 2040 census; that’s 56 percent of the county’s projected growth.

The region is now working to ensure that those who live in the West Valley can work in the West Valley. “People should be able to make a living where they want to live,” says Mayor Mook. **AB**

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These firms are the West Valley's top employers, based on information from the Maricopa Association of Governments:

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What they do: *Healthcare*
West Valley employees: 7,690
Website: bannerhealth.com

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

What they do: *Military training*
West Valley employees: 5,690
Website: luke.af.mil

AMERICAN EXPRESS

What they do: *Financial services*
West Valley employees: 3,700
Website: americanexpress.com

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

What they do: *Higher education*
West Valley employees: 3,550
Website: gcu.edu

AMAZON

What they do: *Online retail sales*
West Valley employees: 3,020
Website: amazon.com

APS/PALO VERDE NUCLEAR STATION

What they do: *Energy production*
West Valley employees: 2,740
Website: aps.com

ABRAZO HEALTHCARE

What they do: *Healthcare*
West Valley employees: 1,940
Website: abrazohealth.com

PETSMART

What they do: *Retail pet supplies*
West Valley employees: 1,860
Website: petsmart.com

JBS PACKERLAND

What they do: *Food processing*
West Valley employees: 1,100
Website: jbssa.com

SHAMROCK FOODS

What they do: *Foodservice industry*
West Valley employees: 1,040
Website: shamrockfoods.com

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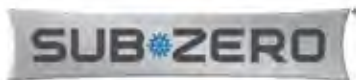
The Gila River Indian Community has established the Community Wellspring Project which, like the life-sustaining waters of the Gila River, will provide resources to nurture people and neighboring communities throughout the Valley. Learn more at gricwellspring.org.



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Show of **FORCE**

West Valley uses lure of its built-in workforce to attract businesses to the region **By ERIC JAY TOLL**

Every morning, Exodus begins. Squinting into the rising sun, more than 51 percent of the West Valley's 885,000-person workforce turns the ignition and heads east. Primary destinations are Deer Valley, Central Phoenix and Scottsdale Airpark submarkets.

One-by-one, tens of thousands of single occupancy vehicles head into the sunrise and slog home into the sunset. The vast majority don't want this drive, they tell the Maricopa Association of Governments annual Trip Reduction Survey.

A decade ago, the West Valley grew affordable housing like desert wildflowers in March. Patches of rooftops were everywhere. The Valley was not growing jobs. Retail followed rooftops, but paychecks were still being cut miles away from bedrooms.

"Our biggest asset is that we have a significant workforce who wants to work close to where it lives," says Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott. "People like living in the West Valley. It's affordable. It's comfortable."

It's quite the workforce. MAG says that more than half the region's workforce is now college-educated.

The number of households earning over \$150,000 tripled in 10 years. The challenge is that the high-value jobs are missing from top ten West Valley employment sectors.

West Valley cities recognized the issue and with WESTMARC waving the promotion banner, the region is getting out the word, "We've got the land, the lifestyle and the workforce." Those are the magic ingredients corporate site selection consultants seek.

What is lacking in the West Valley is the high-value job clusters. That missing piece is starting to change. The region has fixed its eye on strategic employment sectors and economic developers are busy recruiting to those roles.

The West Valley's already-trained and housed workforce sees that its outbound commuters are skilled employees in manufacturing and logistics, aerospace and aviation, biosciences and healthcare, and renewable energy. The region is now flexing its WestMuscle to target those sectors and build the employer clusters that synergistically attract more of the same.

"Throughout our region, we have the largest tracts of single-owner, vacant land in the Valley," says El Mirage Mayor Lana Wood.

Tom Doyle, the city's economic development specialist adds, "El Mirage actually has the largest developer-ready tract, nearly 1,000 acres held by one owner and managed by one developer, the Alter Group."

The clustering has started. Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord says that since Cancer Treatment Centers of America opened, the previously undeveloped area is bustling with construction, "They have expanded twice, and now have spurred new businesses and employment all around them. West Valley Hospital now employs more than 700 people."

The West Valley isn't just waiting for high-value jobs to relocate into its workforce, the cities are taking the steps to grow-their-own future businesses with high value jobs.

In Surprise, a new brain trauma center is expected to be a catalyst for health care and bioscience research and development. The city's AZ TechCelerator is focused on growing the future local businesses in this sector of the job market.

"People want to live and work in the West Valley," says WESTMARC's President and CEO, Michelle Rider. "Our members are working to have the jobs that cut the commute." **AB**



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Road to the future

“**Y** Easy access to transportation helps drive West Valley’s economic development By ERIC JAY TOLL

You hear derisive remarks about highway projects that are ‘bridges to nowhere,’ but without Interstate 11, all of our transportation improvements are essentially roads to nowhere,” says Joseph La Rue, executive vice president of strategic oversight for Sun Health. “When it comes to economic markets, we only have one main road in and out—Interstate 10.”

La Rue is musing about the Valley’s transportation network, which is appropriate because he has another hat as well. La Rue sits on the Arizona State Transportation Board—and he is one of seven people responsible for vision, policy and approving statewide transportation improvements.

“When you think about it,” he says, “we have only one road connecting us to east and west markets, and that’s I-10.” The only other true interstate highway, I-40, doesn’t connect any major markets in the state. I-17 runs in-state from Phoenix to Flagstaff; I-19 runs from Tucson to Nogales.

La Rue is focused on the big picture. “Some look at the proposed I-11 and say, ‘that’s just to get traffic to Las Vegas.’ That is a very shallow perspective.”

La Rue talks about the proliferation of logistics, warehouse and manufacturing centers in the West Valley. “We grow best with an export economy, and our export trading partners are California, Mexico and Canada. We don’t have a route linking Mexico and Canada.”

“Building I-11 will spur significant economic opportunity for all of Arizona in reaching our prime markets,” La Rue believes.

Transportation—not just roads, but transit, commuter rail and freight rail—are high on the list of assets for the West Valley.

“One of our most important roads is Grand Avenue,” says Maricopa County Supervisor Clint Hickman. He has a lot of support for that from the mayors in the ten cities the avenue traverses and the Arizona Department of Transportation.

“Grand Avenue connects the West Valley to Sky Harbor,” points out La Rue, and traffic should smoothly flow down that route. “We’re building interchanges at Grand Avenue and Bell Road, Thunderbird Road and Loop 303.” These are big, expensive projects. Thunderbird Road, an intersection, is a \$50 million project. The interchange at Bell Road tops \$33 million.

The crown jewel, however, is the nearly complete Loop 303. “This route connects I-10 to I-17,” says La Rue. “It opens up a lot of economic opportunity in the West Valley and relieves pressure on I-10.”

Mayor Sharon Wolcott in Surprise agrees. She says cities’ policies along the corridor preserves land for economic opportunity.

A big West Valley project underway is Northern Parkway connecting Loops 101 and 303 on a surface route. This crucial network component has been on the books for years, and the need is now. El Mirage, Peoria and Surprise are all dependent on the route to move truck traffic out of neighborhoods and onto a safer and efficient east-west corridor.

Building on existing arterial routes, ADOT, Maricopa County Department of Transportation and the cities are creating a series of higher-speed parkways throughout the region. Plans for S.R. 30 through Goodyear, Southern Parkway through Phoenix, Goodyear and Buckeye and Wintersburg Parkway in Buckeye and western Maricopa County are all in the early route planning stages. **AB**

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How big will it be? At build-out, the business park will encompass about 1,600-acres with 20 million square feet of office, retail and industrial space. Proposed buildings range in size from 10,000 to 1 million square feet.

Developers: Sunbelt Holdings, Merit Partners, Liberty Property Trust.

Impact: At completion, PV|303 is planned to be one of the largest master planned business parks in the Southwest.

Office Buildings: Class 'A' buildings are proposed as one to three stories ranging from 20,000 -150,000 square feet.

Warehouse/Distribution: From 40,000 to 2 million square feet, the typical warehouse distribution building will be constructed of concrete tilt panels, 32-36 foot clear height with dock high and grade level landing.

Light Industrial: Light industrial lots offer small manufacturing and warehouse users the opportunity to build and own or lease a facility for their specific needs.

Flex Office Buildings: 20,000-200,000-square-foot buildings are proposed with mezzanine options, at-grade loading and dock capabilities.

Location: Located at the confluence of Interstate 10 and Loop 303 in Goodyear, PV|303 offers 2 miles of freeway frontage along Loop 303. It is 2 miles north of Interstate 10 and 9 miles west of Loop 101. Conveniently located only 29 miles from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and 9 miles from Phoenix Goodyear Airport. Transportation access is 5.5 hours from Long Beach, 4.75 hours from Las Vegas and 6.5 hours from El Paso.

FTZ designation: PV|303 benefits from approved Foreign Trade Zone status on portions of the property. This FTZ status provides special customs procedures to U.S. plants engaged in international trade-related activities, making it an attractive opportunity for major companies looking to locate in the metro-Phoenix area. FTZs provide special customs procedures to U.S. plants engaged in international trade-related activities. Duty-free treatment is accorded items that are processed in FTZs and then reexported, and duty payment is deferred on items until they are brought out of the FTZ for sale in the U.S. market which helps offset customs advantages available to overseas producers who compete with domestic industry. In Arizona, a Zone that is approved and activated may be re-classified down from 20% tax valuation to 5% valuation, resulting in the tax benefit of a 75% reduction.

Users: Currently PV|303 is the home to SUBZERO/Wolfe manufacturing and distribution facility as well as Dicks Sporting Goods' Western United States Distribution Center. PV|303 recently closed escrow on an 11.5-acre parcel for SUBZERO/Wolfe expansion and a 29-acre parcel for a light manufacturer which is scheduled to break ground in late 2014.

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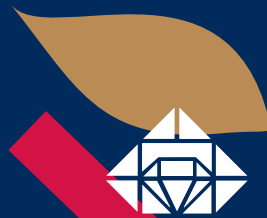
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WEST VALLEY

by the numbers

- Median age of resident: **33**
- Businesses: *more than 50,000*
- Area: *approximately 3,000 square miles*
- Average household income: **\$64,807**
- Population: **1,272,747**
- Educated workforce: *increased 66% over last decade*



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For questions, enrollment information, or to get involved, please contact Melissa Holdaway at 623-974-4959 (x205) or mholdaway@azcharter.com.

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