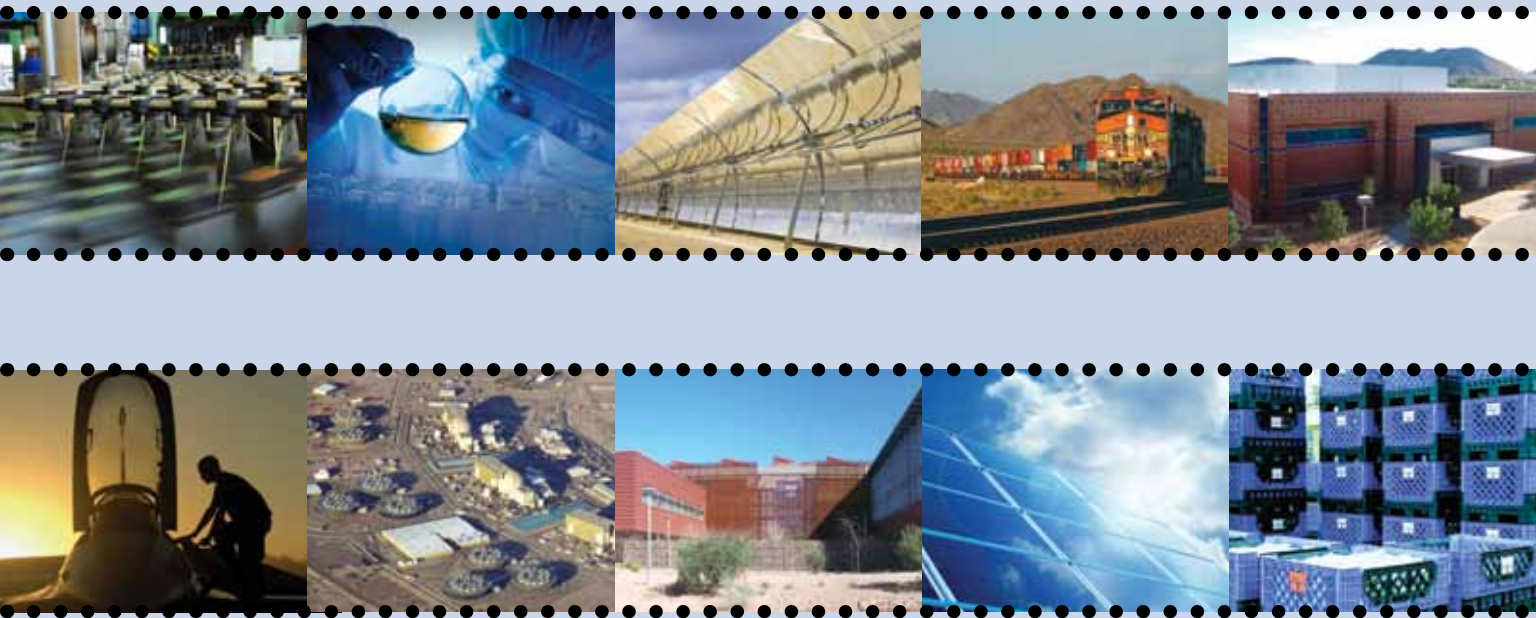




**WESTMARC**

WESTERN MARICOPA COALITION

2012



WESTMARC – the Western Maricopa Coalition – is a public-private partnership of the 15 communities, business community and educational sector west of Interstate 17. The coalition’s mission is to enhance economic development and promote quality of life in the West Valley. WESTMARC is dedicated to the principle that we accomplish more by working together.



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## WESTMARC'S PUSH FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST VALLEY HAS CREATED SUCCESS STORIES IN AEROSPACE, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND HEALTHCARE BY MICHAEL GOSSIE

**T**he West Valley has gone global. And it accomplished that by presenting a united front.

“Working with the economic development departments of the West Valley municipalities, we have created a brochure and a map highlighting the locations of firms in priority industries such as renewable energy and clean technologies, healthcare and life sciences and aerospace and defense,” said Michelle Rider, CEO of WESTMARC, a broad-based coalition of the 15 communities in western Maricopa County. “Promoting those assets and building upon them is the start of creating a new narrative for the West Valley.”

One example of the collaboration between most the West Valley cities is the creation of the Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone, (GMFTZ) No. 277, said Goodyear Mayor Georgia Lord. “The FTZ provides qualified business with significant reductions in import fees and property taxes,” she said. “No. 277 has only been approved for just a year and a half and it is already becoming one of the fastest growing FTZ projects in the western (United States).”

WESTMARC, an acronym for Western Maricopa Coalition, is helping brand the West Valley as an excellent location for manufacturers through its support of the GMFTZ. By the end of



Mayor Rogers  
Avondale Mayor



Georgia Lord  
Goodyear Mayor



Jackie Meck  
Buckeye Mayor



Sharon Wolcott  
Surprise Mayor

2012, it is estimated that FTZ No. 277 will contain more than 2.5 million square feet of activated Zone space, which will make it one of the Top 20 FTZs by activated space.

“The (FTZ) discussions started nearly four years ago ... comprised of our West Valley communities who share that goal of attracting investment into the area,” Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott said. “We understand we all win when national site selectors consider the region as a whole. The GMFTZ puts Surprise and the West Valley on their short list.”

### FOREIGN INVASION

Not only is the GMFTZ making the West Valley a global hub, the area has attracted a number of notable international employers. A few examples:

► Suntech Power Holdings of China — one of the world’s largest solar panel manufacturing companies —

has built its first U.S. manufacturing facility in Goodyear.

► Goodyear is also home to Schoeller Arca Systems, a Netherlands-based company that is a global leader in manufacturing of reusable and foldable plastic containers; and luxury refrigerator manufacturer Sub-Zero, which will eventually employ more than 400 in the West Valley.

► European companies RioGlass Solar and Gestamp Solar Steel have both based their U.S. operations in Surprise.

► Paris-based Saint Gobain has built its solar mirror manufacturing operation in Goodyear, adding to the West Valley’s exploding renewable energy industry.

“Thousands of jobs have already been created within Arizona’s burgeoning solar industry,” said

# WEST

John Lefebvre, president of Suntech America. “As solar becomes a market-driven industry, Arizona is poised to be a global solar industry hub, particularly with the continued development of large-scale solar projects ... With solar, the sky’s the limit.”

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

One thing that definitely does not limit the West Valley is its location. Its road, rail and air transportation capabilities enable the West Valley to be uniquely positioned for economic development. The West Valley is located less than 360 miles from the largest U.S. ports of import (Los Angeles and Long Beach), making the region an excellent location for national and international activity.

“We are truly a gateway community to and from Greater Phoenix,” said Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck. “Our excellent transportation infrastructure and connectivity to the 6th largest economy in the world (California), cannot be understated in importance. Besides I-10, we are connected to I-8 via SR 85 and hope to be in the middle of the future I-11 corridor; connecting Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.”

Lord said West Valley cities are continuing to see interest from are firms who are looking to escape the regulatory and tax burdens of California. An example is Peoria,

which was able to attract Maxwell Technologies, a San Diego-based renewable technology company that will bring 150 research, development and manufacturing jobs to the Valley.

“One of the things we tell investors is that Avondale — literally — is the

center of it all, and that ‘we’re just minutes away,’” said Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers. “Avondale’s convenient location at the intersection of I-10 and Loop 101 makes for easy access to the other parts of the metro area and markets in southern

## 10 LARGEST WEST VALLEY EMPLOYERS

### **Banner Health**

**What they do:** Healthcare  
**West Valley employees:** 8,047  
**Website:** bannerhealth.com

### **Luke Air Force Base**

**What they do:** Military training  
**West Valley employees:** 5,707  
**Website:** luke.af.mil

### **American Express**

**What they do:** Financial services  
**West Valley employees:** 4,008  
**Website:** americanexpress.com

### **Fry’s Food Stores**

**What they do:** Retail groceries  
**West Valley employees:** 3,343  
**Website:** frysf.com

### **Swift Transportation**

**What they do:** Freight delivery  
**West Valley employees:** 2,700  
**Website:** swifttrans.com

### **APS Palo Verde Nuclear Station**

**What they do:** Energy production  
**West Valley employees:** 2,524  
**Website:** aps.com

### **PetSmart**

**What they do:** Retail pet supplies  
**West Valley employees:** 1,779  
**Website:** petsmart.com

### **Abrazo Healthcare**

**What they do:** Healthcare  
**West Valley employees:** 1,313  
**Website:** abrazohealth.com

### **AAA Operations Center**

**What they do:** Insurance and travel services  
**West Valley employees:** 1,050  
**Website:** aaa.com

### **TriWest Healthcare Alliance**

**What they do:** Healthcare for military families  
**West Valley employees:** 935  
**Website:** triwest.com

# ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Here is a look at some of the economic catalysts for the West Valley:

## ADVANCED BUSINESS SERVICES

Several of the West Valley's largest employers — American Express, PetSmart, AAA Operations, and TriWest Healthcare Alliance — are part of this sector. New office developments — such as the Algodon Center — will increase opportunities for the West Valley to grow its business services sector.

## AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

Companies like Lockheed Martin and Honeywell have utilized available land and accessibility to air facilities and made the West Valley their home. Factor in Luke Air Force Base — which has an annual economic impact of \$2.17 billion — and it shows that aerospace and defense is a vital cog to the West Valley's economy.



California. Downtown Phoenix and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport are within an easy 20-minute drive and the Los Angeles area can be reached in six hours.”

In addition to easy access to Sky Harbor, West Valley communities draw on Phoenix-Goodyear Airport, the Buckeye Airport (equipped for private and corporate travelers), Union Pacific Railroad, and BNSF Railway Company as assets that allow the efficient flow of goods and services.

And the West Valley is only strengthening its transportation infrastructure.

“Next year, we will complete construction of the Loop 303 freeway through Surprise,” Wolcott said. “It’s a huge milestone in our history that will attract new people and millions (of dollars) in economic development.”

## BUILT-IN WORKFORCE

West Valley cities are also capitalizing on the affordable cost of living and an educated workforce when they try to attract new businesses.

“Goodyear has access to a large, talented and expanding workforce,” Lord said. “Because of freeway accessibility, Goodyear is generally within a 60-minute commute of anywhere in the metroplex, allowing convenient access to more than three million workers.”

## WEST VALLEY COMMUNITIES

**Avondale**  
avondale.org

**Buckeye**  
buckeyeaz.gov

**El Mirage**  
cityofelmirage.org

**Gila Bend**  
gilabendaz.org

**Glendale**  
glendaleaz.com

**Goodyear**  
goodyearaz.gov

**Litchfield Park**  
litchfield-park.org

**Peoria**  
peoriaaz.gov

**Phoenix**  
phoenix.gov

**Sun City**  
suncityaz.org

**Sun City West**  
suncitywest.org

**Tolleson**  
tollesonaz.org

**Wickenburg**  
ci.wickenburg.az.us

**Youngtown**  
youngtownaz.org

Lord pointed out that Goodyear has also created tremendous community assets with communities such as Estrella, Palm Valley and Pebble Creek.

“Often, key employees and executives of companies have high quality residential developments as a major consideration when they are considering the location for their company,” she said.

Wolcott agrees.

“To know is to love us,” she said. “We are bright, clean, new and a safe city of 117,000 friendly, outdoorsy people. In our last survey, more than 90 percent (of residents) said they would recommend Surprise as a place to live. The days of manufacturers having to locate in tired, run-down settings are over. Companies want to enjoy their corporate home and Surprise is a terrific family environment.”

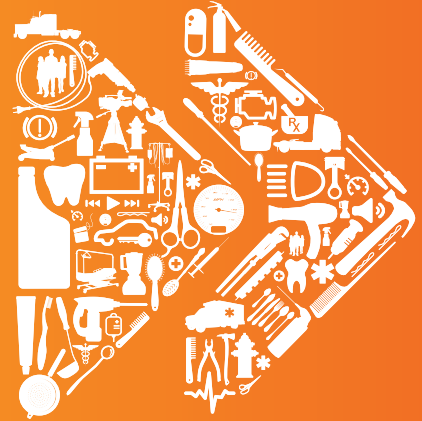
West Valley leaders are quick to point out that they know it takes more than a nice house and mountain views to become an economic juggernaut.

“We do think long term in Surprise,” Wolcott said. “We know education is key to sustaining economic development. That’s why our Strategic Framework includes an initiative to attract a four-year university.”

The university that Wolcott hopes to

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As nonprofit health care providers, the hospitals of Banner Health are committed to keeping the West Valley healthy not only by providing medical excellence, but also by reinvesting in the communities we serve—including the recently completed Banner Thunderbird expansion and a new patient tower at Banner Estrella. Plus, we're opening community health centers in Verrado (Buckeye), Surprise and Goodyear to bring excellent health care even closer to home.

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# ECONOMIC DRIVERS

## HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCE

The region's explosive growth — the average growth of a West Valley city between 2000 and 2010 was 171.43 percent — has increased the demand for services and enabled the West Valley to attract healthcare providers like Abrazo Healthcare and Cancer Treatment Centers of America. In addition, Banner's Sun Health Research Institute is known globally for its groundbreaking research in age-related diseases.

## RENEWABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

The West Valley scored economic wins when it landed two major renewable energy companies — Rioglass of Spain and Suntech of China, the largest manufacturer of solar panels in the world. The West Valley also made significant advances in clean technology when it landed Maxwell Technologies, a leading advanced battery manufacturer.



attract would join a number of West Valley educational institutions that produce the workforce of the future:

- ▶ Thunderbird School of Global Management, the world's top-ranked school of international business.
- ▶ Arizona State University at the West Campus, which offers undergraduate and graduate-level courses leading to a wide range of degrees through the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, and W. P. Carey School of Business.
- ▶ Ottawa University, a private not-for-profit institution, which serves traditional-age as well as adult learners.
- ▶ Midwestern University, whose Glendale campus will be the home of Arizona's founding College of Veterinary Medicine.
- ▶ Grand Canyon University, which offers online and campus-based bachelor's and master's programs.
- ▶ Estrella Mountain Community College and Glendale Community College, which have both built strong connections to West Valley businesses.

With a focus on education and a constantly improving transportation

system, West Valley cities are aiming at attracting industries that will lead them into Arizona's second century.

## BUILDING THE FUTURE

"Our primary focus is on high-wage industries such as aerospace and aviation, renewable energy, healthcare, and high-tech manufacturing," Lord said. "Today, Goodyear is fortunate to have employers in many of these industries. However, many more companies are needed to improve our economy. Goodyear — along with the Greater Phoenix Economic Council and the Arizona Commerce Authority — will continue to build the case for California companies to expand and relocate to Goodyear."

Lord and other West Valley leaders agree that leveraging the resources of regional partners like GPEC and the ACA allows the West Valley to have a global reach. One example Lord cites is the collaboration of regional and state partners that solidified the support for renewable energy legislation that eventually led to several companies coming to the region and is helping Arizona become known as a leader in the solar industry.

The West Valley is also creating its own centers of influence to help businesses grow.

"Our Southwest Railplex is a 2-square-mile industrial park with BSNF Railway service, abundant power, expanded water and wastewater services, and the recently designated FTZ status," Wolcott said. "It's got everything. RioGlass Solar and Gestamp Solar Steel are both basing their U.S. operations from the Railplex. We recently attracted an aeronautical manufacturing firm and a company manufacturing medical packaging devices to the park. That's hundreds of good jobs for our residents in sustainable, long-term industries."

Avondale — recognizing that small businesses form the backbone of local economies — partnered with Gangplank Collective to open Gangplank Avondale in March.

"Gangplank Avondale is a collaborative workspace that is available to technology-focused small businesses and entrepreneurs, who come together in a supportive environment," Avondale's mayor said, stressing that Avondale's strategic focus is on building these sectors: bioscience, healthcare, tourism, renewable energy, advanced business services and information technology, manufacturing and retail.

West Valley leaders stress that they all believe that when a city accomplishes something, the winner



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# GREATER MARICOPA FOREIGN TRADE ZONE

The West Valley has the unique advantage of having its own foreign trade zone, the Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone. The GMFTZ enables the West Valley to provide companies which have a qualifying level of foreign import-export activity with an expedited process to significantly reduce their operating costs.

Already one of the most active new zones in the country, the GMFTZ has been instrumental in bringing manufacturers such as Schoeller Arca Systems, the world leader in plastics manufacturing, to the West Valley. For more information or a free cost-benefit analysis of the GMFTZ program, please visit [gmftz.org](http://gmftz.org).



is the region as a whole.

“We strongly believe in regionalism and support WESTMARC and GPEC initiatives,” said Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett. “Our community depends on the success of surrounding communities and the workforce and attractions available in our trade area.”

Meck says that regionalism plays a critical role in development, since the economy transcends boundaries.

“Through our economic development partners such as WESTMARC, the ACA, GPEC and many others, we all help and depend on one another to better our region and we enthusiastically embrace regionalism,” she says. “From helping our regional employers such as the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Solar Facilities in Gila Bend, our unwavering support for Luke Air Force Base and West Valley infrastructure improvements, we champion the fact that economic development is truly a team effort, from the local, regional, and state perspective. After all, the rising tide of regionalism truly does raise all boats — in essence our communities.”

## CHALLENGES AHEAD

While the communities that make up the backbone of WESTMARC have



Bob Barrett  
Peoria Mayor

a solid vision of the future, that vision is clouded with challenges.

“One of the challenges to development is the lack of infrastructure,” Lord said. “Communities have a limited capacity to bond for improvements, especially given the impacts of the recession.”

Barrett cites a financial issues as obstacles that need to be overcome.

“Other challenges that we face relate to the availability of capital overall, the inverted values of many properties which lead to difficulty in finding ownership, and Arizona’s less competitive position nationally regarding incentivizing business attraction,” he said.

Another challenge, Lord said, is the state’s inability to pass a comprehensive property tax incentive program.

Rogers said that while the Legislature has been successful in

lowering the overall tax responsibility for businesses, “We need to go a step further by continuing to develop well rounded economic incentives and tools that promote growth and attract quality businesses to our state.”

All is not bleak, however. Some challenges are being overcome, Wolcott said.

“We are making big strides in our transportation challenges,” she pointed out. “Major improvements, including the reconstruction of Bell Road, the widening of Grand Avenue, and the current development of the 303 are very important. Next, we need to focus on expanding public transit in Surprise and establishing commuter rail along the Grand Avenue Corridor.”

So while there are concerns and challenges, WESTMARC communities are optimistic about a future built on aerospace, bioscience, healthcare and renewable energy.

“From a legislative standpoint, the economic renaissance of Arizona has begun,” Meck says, “but we need to push our competitiveness and provide the most business-friendly environment and relevant legislative priorities so that we can continue to grow and diversify our economy and health of our great state.” **AB**





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# Q & A

WESTMARC CEO



**Michelle Rider,**  
President and CEO  
WESTMARC

**This month, Michelle Rider celebrates her first year as president and CEO of WESTMARC. She sat down with Az Business magazine to talk about the region's successes over her first 12 months on the job.**

**Q: What are you most proud of after year one as CEO of WESTMARC?**

**A:** I was fortunate to come into the organization at a time when its leadership was ready for change. We changed WESTMARC's membership structure and benefits to create more value and encourage more participation. We created the organization's first strategic plan and we have doubled our revenues from last year. The year's success was a result of a lot of hard work on the part of the leadership and staff ... as well as a lot of luck. We need to focus on keeping the momentum going.

**Q: WESTMARC has made an effort to focus on economic development over the past year. How is the organization accomplishing this goal?**

**A:** The first step we had to take was to start an asset inventory for the West Valley. Working with the economic development departments of the West Valley municipalities, we have created a brochure and a map highlighting the locations of firms in priority industries such as renewable energy and clean technologies, health care and life sciences and aerospace and defense. Promoting those assets and building upon them is the start of creating a new narrative for the West Valley. In terms of policies to enhance economic development in the West Valley, we worked on a piece of legislation this session to address one of the biggest impediments to quality growth in the West Valley – the lack of infrastructure. That specific legislation was ultimately unsuccessful, but the issue is not going away and we will continue to pursue a solution.

**Q: What are the economic advantages for business growth?**

**A:** The West Valley has an advantage in its availability of land, proximity to large feeder markets and the Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone (GMFTZ). New economic development tools passed by the legislature and signed by Gov. Brewer combined with those advantages make high-wage manufacturing a reachable goal for the West Valley. With the area's projected population growth and increasing transportation access, higher education, healthcare and advanced business services also make sense as good economic opportunities.

**Q: You mention "creating a new narrative for the West Valley." What do you mean by that?**

**A:** There are pervasive misperceptions about the West Valley. For example, there is a perception that the West Valley is kind of an "old boys' network" and behind the times. People may be surprised to know facts about the West Valley including that five of the 13 mayors in the West Valley are women. In addition, the West Valley is the only part of Greater Phoenix with Latino mayors. The West Valley is home to one of the top medical research centers in the country, the Banner Sun Health Research Institute. People would also likely be surprised that the West Valley has become an international hub of renewable energy product manufacturing with the operations of Suntech of China, Rioglass and Gestamp of Spain and Saint-Gobain of France.

**Q: Regionalism is an increasingly common theme. How does regionalism work within WESTMARC?**

**A:** Regionalism is essential within the West Valley and is at the heart of what makes WESTMARC work. Regionalism is also key throughout the Greater Phoenix region. We work to promote the West Valley because what you do in economic development is find where you have strengths and try to enhance them. But we never market ourselves to the disadvantage of the East Valley or any other part of Arizona. My job is to more closely connect us to other parts of the region, not insulate ourselves. **AB**

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# PROFILES

## WESTMARC MEMBERS



**Sharon Harper,**  
President and CEO  
Plaza Companies

In 1982, Sharon Harper co-founded Plaza Companies, a privately held, full-service real estate company with a portfolio of more than 5 million square feet valued in excess of \$1 billion. Harper is responsible for all day-to-day management and strategic decision making.

**Q: You are working on a new project in Peoria called BioInspire. What is the purpose of the project and how will it work?**

**A:** BioInspire is a biotechnology incubator being built now on our Plaza Del Rio Campus. It's a public-private partnership between BioAccel, Plaza Companies and the City of Peoria to create an ideal environment for entrepreneurship and innovation, specifically in the area of medical device development. Our company is providing the space on the Plaza Del Rio Campus for the facility, and BioAccel will work with companies in the incubator space to give them the resources they need for their products to take root in the marketplace. The City is providing strategic financial incentives to the selected companies. It will help position Peoria as a leader in the biotechnology industry and attract high-paying jobs to the region.

**Q: What is the one thing you think the West Valley should be focusing on at this time?**

**A:** The West Valley should continue to position itself in a positive manner for economic development. As we emerge from the economic downturn, new opportunities will arise to attract businesses to the region that will truly be job creators and generators.



**Bill Sheldon,**  
General counsel  
SCF Arizona

Bill Sheldon, general counsel, corporate secretary and chief compliance officer at SCF Arizona, is chair of WESTMARC. The Glendale resident is the co-author of the State Bar of Arizona's Arizona Employment Law handbook and a frequent speaker on topics relating to workers' compensation and employment law. Sheldon, who was hired by SCF in 1997 as a workers' compensation litigator after nine years in private practice, is serving a one-year term as WESTMARC chair. His term started at the beginning of January 2012.

**Q: What do you see as WESTMARC's biggest accomplishment?**

**A:** We have been able to foster regionalism and get 15 different communities to work together to achieve one common goal. That is a remarkable accomplishment. It has resulted in greater inclusion and the leadership from all the cities should be applauded for making that happen.

**Q: How does WESTMARC's promote the West Valley?**

**A:** Besides being an advocate on policy issues affecting the region, WESTMARC holds events and asset tours throughout the West Valley to showcase what a perfect location the region is for businesses to establish themselves and grow.

**Q: How has the perception of the West Valley changed?**

**A:** People are starting to wake up and see that the growth is happening more quickly in the West Valley and there are more opportunities in the West Valley. This isn't the Wild West anymore. This is a business-friendly, family-friendly environment. I love living in Glendale.



**Ron Campbell,**  
Senior director  
of ticket sales  
Arizona Cardinals

Campbell is senior director of ticket sales for the Arizona Cardinals. A resident of Peoria, Campbell also worked for the Phoenix Coyotes. From his office at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, he manages ticket sales for the team's club seat and season ticket inventories.

**Q: You have worked for two of the four major sports teams in the Valley and both are in the West Valley. What is their impact to that economy?**

**A:** The more bodies and eyeballs we get out to the West Valley the better. When I came here, it was more of a relationship purchase for sports fans. People tend to live in their 5-mile box. But we notice people don't mind commuting here. It really doesn't take that long to get here. During the Cardinals season, there is an aura surrounding tailgating before games. There is also entertainment in Westgate across the street.

**Q: The Super Bowl returns to Glendale in 2015. What's the buzz?**

**A:** With our existing ticket holders, they are wondering how to get involved, so the interest is definitely there. It's the same for new businesses. A lot are getting involved and hoping for the opportunity to get in the building.

**Q: You live and work in the West Valley. Do you take pride in that?**

**A:** Absolutely. When we moved here, we bought property in Ahwatukee and lived there briefly. It was 35 miles door to door. We chose a planned community at Vistancia. We chose the Peoria School District as we had two children in high school. It's nice being close to work now.



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## the interchange of business

PV|303 is a master planned business park designed to meet the growing demand for commercial and industrial opportunities in the greater Phoenix area. It is strategically located at the confluence of Interstate 10 and Loop 303 in Goodyear, Arizona, and home of Sub-Zero and Dick's Sporting Goods manufacturing and distribution centers.

PV|303 is the perfect location to establish a high-profile, high visibility presence along the important I-10 corridor. The options are countless and scaled to fit any requirement, from a startup entrepreneurial enterprise to a million square foot warehouse.

PV|303 offers a total of 1,600 acres with 20 million square feet of office, retail and industrial space. The location is ideally situated to serve Arizona and key markets in the western USA such as the Ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Diego, California; El Paso, Texas and Las Vegas, Nevada.

PV  
303

Inquire how to navigate the full potential of PV|303.  
Call Sean Walters at 480-905-0770, Kevin Czerwinski  
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