

RECOM

Retired Employees City of Mesa

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RECOM Executive Board

Message from the Board

Mayor Scott Smith Brings New Vision to Mesa

On June 2, 2008 Scott Smith began a four-year term as Mesa's new Mayor, succeeding Keno Hawker. Mr. Hawker had served as Mayor for eight years and was precluded from running again by Mesa's term limit condition.

Mr. Smith defeated former Councilmember Rex Griswold in the general election, while Vice Mayor Claudia Walters lost in the primary election.

Mayor Smith is a life-long resident of Mesa, and his father is George Smith, former Superintendent of Mesa Public Schools. His undergraduate degree in accounting is from BYU, while his Masters in business administration and law degree are from ASU. Mayor Smith is an accountant, a lawyer and a pilot. He has worked as a business consultant and a homebuilder, and has taught college level classes.

In his inaugural address to the citizens of Mesa, Mayor Smith spoke realistically of the challenges we face in both the public and private sectors. But he also spoke of the great opportunities and

assets that Mesa has. He outlined six specific areas where he will be focusing his attention:

- Maintaining safe, active neighborhoods with a quality education system.
- Strengthening Mesa's economic base and creating new jobs.
- Celebrating Mesa's successes and improving its image.
- Making Mesa a leader in regional issues.
- Ensuring that residents can trust City government to be fiscally responsible and responsive to citizen needs.
- Revitalizing older areas by attracting new development through creative zoning tools.

Mayor Smith concluded by asking all citizens to become involved in building a better Mesa together. In his words, "The job starts tonight".

One of the Mayor's first major public appearances was the Mayor's Breakfast on July 8. The theme was Building a Better Mesa. I had the opportunity to attend along with RECOM Board member Bill Petrie and approximately 300 Mesa business and community leaders. Speakers included City Manager Chris Brady and Economic Development Director Bill Jibjiniak in addition to Mayor Smith.

Mayor Smith challenged those attending to:

- Be loyal to Mesa
- Be engaged in the community
- Be an advocate for Mesa
- Be committed to Mesa, and
- Be generous to Mesa

He also stated the City's commitment to the business community:

- We can and will do a better job.
- We will listen to you.
- We will think differently.
- We will be loyal, and
- We will make Economic Development a top priority.

He concluded by restating his theme of Building a Better Mesa – The Work Begins Today.

Since assuming office in June Mayor Smith has been active in a number of other areas. He brokered a successful compromise regarding land use planning in the area surrounding Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, a planning effort that had been underway for many months.

In June the Mayor traveled to Washington, D.C. and spoke to the Brookings Institute, a national "think tank", about Superstition Vista, the currently vacant area east of Mesa in Pinal County. As a result of that meeting, the Mayor was invited to Denver to represent Arizona in a major discussion about emerging national growth centers.

On a somewhat lighter note, this Mayor "piloted" the first carload of light-rail passengers into Mesa on August 6. The line runs from Tempe into Mesa on West Main, terminating near the former Tri-City Mall site. Full service is expected to begin on December 27.

As retired employees, many of the Mayor's policy directions may not seem relevant. However, many of us live in Mesa and are still active in the community. It is important to be aware of Mesa's image, financial situation and political environment. Wherever you live, I would encourage you to be responsible citizens, to stay involved, and to "give something back" whenever you can.

By Frank Mizner

Former Planning Director of COM
RECOM Board of Directors

Speaker:

Charming, low key, non-alarmist --- but packing a powerful message. That's how you'd describe Linda Burns representing The Hospice of the Valley, our speaker at RECOM's July meeting. Linda is in charge of the "11th Hour Program", a service of volunteers and staff who visit the dying who have no-one left to sit with them. But even if there are friends and family, **the mission of Hospice of the Valley** is to provide care, support and comfort to those suffering a long and difficult dying process – and to their loved ones.

If you read the first paragraph, and you haven't flipped to the next page because you don't want to think about **that** subject, you're in the frame of mind to benefit from Linda's presentation. She was not here to speak about hospice service per se. Linda spoke about documents giving your health care directives when you are too ill or incapacitated to communicate your own wishes. This is very practical information that you may not need for quite a while. On the other hand..... it's a very good thing to have in order.

Living Will (What kind of medical care do you want if you can't speak for yourself).

Medical Power of Attorney (Who will be in charge to make sure your wishes are carried out, or make decisions for you).

Communication: where to file the documents
Not in your safety deposit box at the bank!

Living Will:

Arizona has no officially required form, but whatever you do write down has to be notarized. An Arizona Living Will is valid in other states if Arizona recognizes their living will. It can be revised at any time. If you want a form, read on.

Medical Power of Attorney:

This comes into effect and goes out of effect as your own consciousness comes and goes. If you are able to speak for yourself, the Healthcare Power of Attorney is not in effect.

Linda noted that it is best to appoint a primary and secondary person, but not co-equals. Think of how often your children have disagreed about where to have Christmas dinner. Do you really want a squabble in the hospital when your life is at stake?

One person has to be in charge. Select that person carefully, and keep in mind what kind of stresses he/she has in their own life. (An ill spouse, personal illness, financial problems, too many other responsibilities -religious convictions counter to your directives...?) If your appointee does not believe that life can ever be ended, but you don't want heroic measures to be taken, it is not fair to put such a burden on the appointee. Will that person be up to the task?

Ask him or her if they are willing to serve in that capacity! You'd be amazed at the number of people who are surprised when they are called long distance to make a decision about an elderly relative or friend's medical care – and they had no idea they had Medical Power of Attorney!

Legally, your appointee doesn't have to be in the same state as you – but it's something to think about. How long will it take them to get to you if they are a great distance away?

Where to file the Documents:

You probably already know that these people should have copies:

1. **The person appointed to be your Medical Power of Attorney**
2. **Other family members**
3. **Doctor(s)**
4. **Hospital**
5. **Bank deposit box is OK if it is not the only place you have the docs.**

How will someone get into your box? Or even if they are authorized to do so, what if it's at midnight or on a Sunday?

But did you know that **in Arizona there is a database where you can store your documents** and with a password doctors and other medical providers can get a copy if immediately (24/7) if needed. (For example, you have a car accident out of state and no one can get to the documents quickly.)

- This registry was created by the AZ legislature in May 2004. The AZ Secretary of State's Office oversees its security and operations.
- It is free.
- You get a card for your wallet with the password on it.
- You decide who has access by giving them your password. It would make sense also to give the password to all those who have a copy of your directives.
- If you want to change it, send a new document to the registry. The one with the most recent date, is the one in effect.

Arizona Health Care Directive Registry

Only the following documents may be filed there:

1. Health Care (Medical Power of Attorney)
2. Mental Health Care
3. Living Will

Get more info on where to get blank forms and instruction on how to file your documents on this registry from:

Arizona Secretary of State's Office
Advance Directive Registry
1700 W. Washington – 7th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-4285
www.azsos.gov

OR

Hospice of the Valley
Healthcare Project
1510 E. Flower St.
Phoenix, AZ 85014
602-222-2229
www.hcdecisions.org

Caveat emptor:

As always, the “Speaker” column contains highlights of the presentation, not a verbatim record. This topic could not be adequately covered in 40 minutes. **For this topic, it is especially important that readers get legal advice before drawing up or filing health care documents.**

Reports

Benefits Task Force

The Task Force meeting was held on July 24, 2008.

As we reported last month, no companies other than our current ones responded to the RFPs so we'll have Medco and BC/BS for the foreseeable future.

This might be a good place to say that we have a contract, with BC/BS to use their providers and their negotiated cost structure. The City pays BC/BS \$4.25 per member per month for this privilege. The City of Mesa Employee Trust Fund is our insurance “company”. “What’s the diff” you say?

On the up-side, it means we get lower prices at doc's offices, hospitals, therapists and so on because BC/BS has so much clout due to their large number of members. (Who knew that in the insurance business Mesa's approximately 5000 members is small potatoes?) But BC/BS doesn't pay for the services we use and they don't decide if we can have a particular service or procedure.

The City Trust Fund pays for our healthcare – and they're more personal and closer to home if you have a dispute about coverage. On the down-side, it means BC/BS won't let us have a “Blue Card”, which is accepted by BC/BS providers anywhere in the country. If they would let the City into that program, we wouldn't need Healthsmart.

The City also sent out a request for bids to provide Wrap-Around coverage – for any labs, hospital staff etc that do not belong to the BC/BC network. “Wrap-arounds” negotiate out-of-network claims sent to them, and take a percentage of what they save the City. Our current out-of-state network, Healthsmart, also provides this service and may bid on it as well. 200-300 retirees use Healthsmart for their dependent children going to school out-of-state.

Just in case we were feeling too good about things staying the same! We'll get **new cards in January**. This is due entirely to the internal mysteries of claims processing (You don't really, really want to know the details, did you?), and the claims address will have to be changed on the card.

I'm not going to worry my head about it because the COM Benefits Dept. is still the place to ask questions, ask for adjustments etc. That part won't change. Just your doc, hospital or favorite health guru will have a new address to mail claims.

Spectera problems are ongoing. Jody got a laundry list of complaints and she's had a few of her own – administratively speaking. Other options are being considered, but with so much else going on, we'll probably have this stellar outfit for another year. Jody is really trying to make them improve their service, but have you ever tried to give a command to another man's dog? Same results here. Stay tuned.

Trustfund:

Healthy. As of May 31, 2008 the balance was approximately \$16.1 million.

Questions asked:

1. Retirees who are on Medicare Part B get a \$60.00 discount on their premiums. Now that the premiums are nearly \$100.00, is it possible to raise the discount received by retirees who are on Medicare? Not having to be the primary insurer, saves the City money.

Answer:

Probably not – certainly not by 2009. Time and money are too short right now.

2. Who gets billed first for Onsite Mobile Mammography if my spouse has insurance other than COM?

Answer:

If spouse of current employee or retiree has other insurance, that insurance is primary and will be billed first.

Look for Mobile onsite Mammogram schedule elsewhere in this newsletter. This section is getting way too long already. Dear reader, are you still with me?

Message from Jody Topping:

New City policy!

Got unmarried college students age 19-23 covered on any of your City of Mesa Insurance? If you want your dear (or even not so dear) progeny covered from Sept. 1, 2008 to Dec. 31, 2008, **send Jody verification of full time student status. Pronto!** If it's not in by Sept 30th the insurance lapses, and **if you want it reinstated it'll cost you \$100.00.** Jody's message was, of course, much more polite, but that was the gist of it.

So if this includes you, let's review the drill:

Fall 2008 verification must have:

- Name of the college, university or trade school
- Your child's name
- Fall 2008 as the semester enrolled
- Number of credit hours
(at least 12 credit hours for full-time)
- Your employee name and ID#

It goes without saying that if your student is no longer a fulltime student his/her coverage stops on August 31, 2008. If he/she turned 23 or was married you should inform the Benefits Office via the Benefit Enrolment/ Change form because the coverage stops on the last day of the month that these events occurred.

Holy cow, that's a lot of stuff to remember. I'm glad my darling is waaay past 23...well never mind just how waaay past!

Meetings:

Usual time and place, 9:00AM, Fire Station at Mesa Dr. and 1st Street

August 20th:

Speaker: Matt Fehling, CEO and President of the AZ Better Business Bureau, will present an overview of BBB's activities and discussion of consumer fraud, especially involving the elderly.

September 17th:

Speaker: Johann Zietsman, Executive Director, Mesa Arts Center, will give an overview of the Center and volunteer opportunities.

October 15th:

Speaker: Jody Topping, City of Mesa Employee Benefits Administrator. Jody will explain any changes in plans and premiums and answer benefits questions of a general nature, not those relating to individual claims.

Announcements:

Mobile Onsite Mammography:

Main Library, 64 E. 1st St.

September 3 and 5, 8:00AM-5:00PM

September 5, 7:00AM-4PM

September 8, 8:00AM-5PM

Fire Station 201, 360 E. 1st Street

September 4, 7:00AM-11:00AM

September 5, 8:00AM-5:00PM

Red Mountain Library, 635 N. Power Rd.

September 4, 1:00PM-5:00PM

September 8, 7:00AM- 11:00AM

For appointment

Call: (800) 285-0272

Bring: Your insurance card

Your doctor's name (first & last)

Your doctor's address and phone number (to receive results)

Wear: Two-piece outfit

No lotions, powders or deodorants

Remember: If you have only COM insurance, Blue Cross/Blue Shield is paying for everything; no cost to you or to the City.

If you have implants, they cannot accommodate you on the mobile unit.

WANT TO GIVE BACK?

Here are two chances:

Community Spirit Golf Tournament:

**Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008, 7:30AM – 12:30PM
at Dobson Ranch Golf Course**

This will be the 12th annual golf tournament for City employees and retirees to help raise money for a favorite charity. Doesn't matter if you can't golf. They'll pair you up with someone who can! Or, if you don't want to golf, other volunteers are needed too. If interested, see the flyer at the end of this newsletter for details and an entry form.

Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation

There will be an informational meeting to introduce residents interested in volunteering for the Foundation, **on September 17th at 5:00PM at the Mi Amigo's Restaurant at Southern Ave. and Gilbert Rd.**

This is a private group of folks interested in helping the Parks and Rec. Dept. with funds and volunteers. They provide scholarships for swim lessons, playground equipment for Park of the Canals, the Mesa Pow Wow, the Fit City Program, a second dog park and numerous other projects that are needed but the City can't afford to provide.

For more info: Melanie Dykstra, 480-644-5783, or check out the website at www.sponsormesa.org

What is the Community Spirit Program?

The City of Mesa Employees Community Spirit Program captures the essence of our commitment toward building a better community. Last year, Mesa employees raised over \$210,045 for the Community Spirit Program, donated dozens of pints of blood, volunteered numerous hours at local charities, helped make the holidays a little brighter for Mesa families, and collected hundreds of cans of food for local food banks.

This generous support is a positive reflection of the continuing commitment of City employees to community needs.

Here's how to you can help.

This will be the 12th annual golf tournament for City employees to help raise money for a favorite Mesa charity. The golf tournament allows you to have fun with your fellow co-workers and win great prizes such as a F150 Extended Cab pickup, golf equipment, and much more. You can do all this, while raising money for a local Mesa charity.



So what if you don't golf?

It doesn't matter. The tournament is set up in a scramble format so expert golf skills aren't necessary. Form a team, or let us place you on a winning team.

If you still don't want to golf, there are other ways you can participate. Volunteers are needed to help run the tournament. You'll be able to join in on the fun while helping a good cause.

Volunteers are needed to help with:

- Registration
- Hole in one contest
- Closest to the pin
- Golf cart set up
- Distribution of tee prizes
- Clean up

If you are interested in volunteering, call Dawn Bies at ext. 2269.

Who's eligible to play?

All City of Mesa employees and retirees, and their family members are eligible to play in the tournament.

What are you waiting for? Register today!



The City of Mesa Employees Community Spirit Program presents:

The 12th Annual Mesa Employees Charitable Golf Scramble

Dobson Ranch Golf Course
Saturday, September 27, 2008
7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Win a Ford F150 Extended Cab pickup from San Tan Ford!

