

Moonlight Movies Free! In The Park

Councilman Tom Simplot
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Our Annual Outdoor Film Series at Steele Indian School Park
is Already Underway

You Can Still Catch Our Last Summer Film,
“The Sandlot”
Saturday, June 24, at Sunset

We'll take a break for a few months,
and then be back with two great films:

- ★ The Whoopi Goldberg comedy “Sister Act” on Sept. 16 ★
- ★ Mel Brooks classic “Young Frankenstein” on Oct. 28 ★

Be sure to join us for fun under the stars!

Steele Indian School Park Amphitheater
Third Street & Indian School Road
Bring friends, neighbors, blankets, chairs and a snack!

Brought to you by
Councilman Tom Simplot
City of Phoenix, Council District 4



GOING TO THE DOGS

The first phase of the dog park at Steele Indian School Park will soon be ready for central Phoenix dogs and their human companions. Thanks to the generous support and hard work of community volunteers and dog lovers, the dog park will officially open with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 7:30 a.m. on June 24. Please join me, my golden retrievers and a host of other four-legged friends for leash-free fun in the northeast corner of Steele Indian School Park.

If you would like to contribute to this effort, please contact my office at 602-262-7447.



Dear friends:

Welcome to our latest edition of the “Heart of the City Newsletter.” Inside, you'll find information about our recent joint Crime Summit, held with District 5 Councilman Claude Mattox. The event yielded some great ideas that we're working to implement.

I've also included information about our various public safety initiatives, including the fight against crystal meth, the progress of the West Phoenix Revitalization Project and a new effort to curtail dangerous driving on our streets.



Last, but not least, we're finishing the spring edition of the Moonlight Movies in the Park. Be sure to put our next movie on your schedule: “The Sandlot” on June 24. Then keep your eye out for our upcoming fall films, “Sister Act” and “Young Frankenstein”.

As always, I am proud to serve the residents of District 4, and hope that this newsletter will provide you with useful resources. If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail my office at council.district.4@phoenix.gov, or call 602-262-7447. Your input is always vital to our work.

Sincerely,

Tom Simplot

Inside: Crime Summit, Moonlight Movies, Pay Day Loan Centers, Graffiti Busters, Driver Distractions and Dog Park News *plus* Photos

COMING TOGETHER TO FIGHT CRIME

Our third Crime Summit, this time including Districts 4 and 5, was held on Feb. 4.

Once again, neighborhood leaders, law enforcement, city officials, and other interested residents came together to discuss and find solutions to the crime challenges facing our neighborhoods. I continue to be incredibly impressed with how many people are willing to get involved and work together to tackle some of our most pressing issues.

One of the concerns at the top of the list was illegal drugs, particularly the production and distribution of methamphetamines in our residential neighborhoods (see sidebar). "Meth"

poses a triple threat – it destroys users and their families, it drives property crimes to obtain money to buy more drugs, and creates in-home meth labs that endanger to the entire neighborhood.

Also high on the list of concerns were blight, education, illegal immigration and stray animals.

We're working hard on the blight issue and understand how even one dilapidated property can impact an entire community. Neighborhood associations have been especially helpful working with the city to identify blighted properties and get them either cleaned up or torn down. The growing problem of stray animals is new to the list but a real concern. Strays are a danger to domestic animals and young children, carry disease and degrade parks and property with their waste. We're now working with Maricopa County Animal Care and Control to increase our activities in those areas most impacted by this problem. We're working with county, state and federal officials to find some common ground on illegal immigration. Most immigration decisions are outside the jurisdiction of the city of Phoenix but the costs associated with services impact us first and most directly.



Officers from Maricopa County Animal Care & Control work with residents at our 2006 Crime Summit. More than 100 residents met to discuss neighborhood crime and other concerns.

Public Safety Update

Methamphetamines – A new Phoenix ordinance is now in effect that makes it more difficult to obtain pseudoephedrine, the main ingredient in homemade "meth". Over-the-counter cold and allergy medicines containing pseudoephedrine can now only be obtained at the counter and purchasers must provide identification information with each sale and are limited in how much of the product they can purchase. This will make it far more difficult for those trying to make homemade meth because they require large quantities of pseudoephedrine. Pseudoephedrine along with a toxic brew of other chemicals is explosive and the fumes from which are poisonous, endangering entire neighborhoods.

West Phoenix Revitalization – We are determined to help the residents of west Phoenix reclaim, protect and strengthen their neighborhoods. We're cleaning up alleys, identifying and repairing blighted properties and both the Phoenix Police Department and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office have increased their enforcement efforts in the area. Recent sweeps have cleared the streets of dozens of criminals responsible for hundreds of property crimes. I really appreciate the outstanding efforts of west Phoenix residents, including Maryvale, and their determination to make their neighborhoods great places to live.

Abandoned Shopping Carts – These abandoned shopping carts seem to be everywhere. It might not seem like a major crime problem, but the theft of these carts costs retailers millions of dollars every year and result in all of us paying increased prices. Plus, abandoned carts littering our neighborhoods devalue property. The city of Phoenix, working together with concerned grocery chains, recently completed a pilot program to recover stolen and abandoned shopping carts. We contracted with a private company to collect carts and take them to a storage facility where retailers can reclaim them for a nominal fee. In 90 days we collected 32,000 carts, about 2,000 carts more than the retailer would normally recover. We hope to continue this program and push the carts out of our neighborhoods.



Area residents enjoyed the afternoon with Councilman Simplot during the "Melrose on 7th Avenue" street fair in April. The street fair included a classic car show, local artists and pedestrian-friendly shopping from Indian School Road to Campbell Avenue.



Councilman Simplot with Cindy Gentry from Community Food Connections at the first anniversary celebration for the Downtown Phoenix Public Market. The market is open Saturdays from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Central Avenue and McKinley Street.

The City of Phoenix and Maricopa County Sheriff's Office recently joined forces in a community clean-up project in west Phoenix.



Jon Douglas, owner, with business partner David Clark, of Figs Home & Garden, celebrate the opening of their 7th Avenue & Campbell home decor store with Councilman Simplot.

**Light Rail questions?
Call the Light Rail Hotline at 602-534-1807 with concerns or questions related to light rail construction.**

THE FIGHT AGAINST GRAFFITI NEEDS YOU!

We have been getting many calls lately about graffiti in our neighborhoods. Phoenix operates the Graffiti Busters program to help clear sidewalks, buildings, fences and signs of this illegal vandalism.

Right now the staff of Graffiti Busters is seeing many calls for service. To help speed up the process of graffiti removal in your community, consider organizing a graffiti clean-up with friends and neighbors.

Any neighborhood group or Block Watch listed with Neighborhood Services can get paint, and borrow supplies such as paint rollers, brushes, buckets, ladders and paint sprayers. Graffiti Busters will deliver and pick up the equipment.

For more information, call Graffiti Busters at 602-495-0323.

CONTROLLING PAY-DAY LOAN CENTERS

Phoenix is considering a new ordinance concerning pay-day loan centers. Despite some concerns I have heard, we are not eliminating pay-day loan centers. The ordinance would not affect existing businesses. Instead, it would restrict where new pay-day loan centers can be situated, in the same way bars or adult businesses are restricted.

We want to ensure that these lending companies don't target people unable to handle their high interest rates. Any business loaning money at up to 480 percent annually is taking advantage of people with few options. Concentrating such businesses in a handful of at-risk neighborhoods also attracts criminal elements, deteriorates nearby property values, displaces other local businesses that might provide more jobs and regularly concerns the neighborhoods I visit.

We will continue to monitor pay-day loan centers and will work with the people who own and operate these businesses to see that they treat our residents fairly. Our neighborhoods have the right to establish some limits in their communities and our new ordinance will do just that. I'm interested in hearing what you have to say about pay-day loan centers in your neighborhood. Please feel free to call my office at 602-262-7447, or e-mail council.district.4@phoenix.gov with comments.

ONE LESS DRIVER DISTRACTION

Have you seen the way people drive lately? They have fast food in one hand, their cell phone in the other, a Blackberry on their laps and they're trying to steer with their knees and elbows. It's downright frightening.

That's why we're considering an ordinance that would require Phoenix drivers to use a hands-off earpiece and microphone if they need to talk on their cell phone while in the car. The distractions caused by cell phone use are now a leading cause of vehicle accidents.

Cell phones have become an important part of our daily lives. But we must accept that driving safely is more important than any call you have to make or receive. In truth, we should probably all pull over into a parking lot or side street and stop our vehicles if we have to talk. But at least a new ordinance would make sure we have at least one hand free to drive.

Please feel free to call my office, at 602-262-7447 and share your opinions on this issue. You can also e-mail me at council.district.4@phoenix.gov. Hopefully we can consider an ordinance in the coming months. Let us know what you think!