

Backus & Smith Welcomed To SALT Board Of Directors

By Rebecca Goff
Special to the News

The Board of Directors of the Superstition Area Land Trust (SALT) is pleased to announce the addition of two familiar and prominent faces. Returning is Chuck Backus, who served as a SALT Director in the late 1990s and

early 2000s. As President, Chuck led efforts to preserve the Superstition Foothills as open space. He proposed, and then hired a consulting team to develop, the "Superstition Area Land Plan", later accepted by the Supervisors and integrated into the county's Comprehensive Plan. Chuck still considers this effort to be

SALT's crowning achievement. He resigned in 2002 to lead a monumental planning effort called Superstition Vistas, an area of Arizona State Trust Land the size of Mesa, Chandler, Tempe and Gilbert combined.

As a Professor of Electrical Engineering and Associate Dean for Research at ASU, Chuck created one of only three facilities worldwide for conducting research and certification of solar panels. It was located at ASU's Polytechnic Campus, development and growth of which was also led by Chuck in his position as Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

The second addition to the SALT Board is Sandie Smith. Serving as the first woman ever on the Pinal County Board of Supervisors from 1993-2008, Sandie's efforts to conserve the Superstition Foothills as open space and to plan for growth in Superstition Vistas were invaluable. Her dedication to forming partnerships between public and private sector businesses became well-known throughout the state. She served on numerous local and state level commissions, including as President of both the Arizona Association of Counties and the Pinal County Town Hall Committee.

Prior to her election as Supervisor, Sandie served as member and President of the Boards of the Apache Junction Unified School District and the AJ Chamber of Commerce. She is an organizing member of the AJ Boys & Girls Club.

From 2009 to January 2017, Sandie was President and CEO of the Pinal Partnership. SALT, a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose mission is to conserve the natural Sonoran Desert open spaces surrounding the Superstition Wilderness Area, welcomes these distinguished and very capable leaders to its Board.

from Meeting A-1

Vice Mayor Chip Wilson and several other councilmembers favored focusing annex efforts on just county islands for now.

Mayor Serdy said he plans to continue reaching out to areas inside and outside the City and Councilmember Dave Waldron recommended that the issue be discussed further at a Council meeting and direction be given to staff.

Among the other agenda items covered at the Saturday work session were assignments to regional organizations that the City belongs to. Vice Mayor Wilson will go to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Board meetings with the Mayor and Councilmember Struble will cover Greater Phoenix Economic Council meetings. Councilmember Waldron will continue to represent the city at Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAG) and Councilmember Barker will continue to represent the city at the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Regional Council, MAG Domestic Violence Council, Community Alliance Against Family Abuse board, the Genesis Project board, and the Pinal Partnership Board.

Also continuing their current assignments are Councilmember Evans who represents the city at the Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Councilmember Rizzi will continue to represent the city at the Boys and Girls Club of the East Valley and the Pinal Partnership Education committee. She said that her dual role serving on the city council and the Apache Junction Unified School District board would not be a conflict of interest. City Manager Bryant Powell will continue representation at East Valley Partnership (EVP).

There was a brief presentation by City Public Information Officer Al Bravo with advice and instruction for proper use by the Council of social media, and preparation for news interviews, etc. After reviewing guidelines for social media, Bravo advised council that, although they may not think so, due to their positions, they are always representing the city when posting on social media. He also said that the city prides itself on being responsive.

City Manager Bryant Powell said he would continue to meet with the State Land Department on acquisition opportunities, but the private sector has to initiate an auction. He said that acquiring State land has been a priority since the last Council retreat. Councilmember Evans said that there are pockets of State Land within the City and suggested that the City inquire about the opportunities for the City to get the smaller pieces.

Bureau of Land Management Land (BLM) was also discussed as an agenda item. Mayor Serdy explained that no money can be charged on BLM land except through a non-profit organization. He pointed out that the rodeo grounds and Prospector Park could be used more frequently if the City could charge for events. He added that Congressman Paul Gosar is pushing the Federal government to "give the State the land (BLM)" to pay the money the State is owed. He then requested a work session and direction to staff regarding getting some of the BLM land.

Councilmember Evans re-

minded the group that the Superstition Mountain Promotional Corporation was originally formed to act as the non-profit for events at the rodeo grounds and requested that staff try to find out why the group seems restricted to Lost Dutchman Days. She added that National Forest land has the same restrictions as BLM. Vice Mayor Wilson suggested that the City work with our national leaders to "at least change the rules."

Before the meeting was adjourned at noon, there was a discussion on the process for establishing a City utility department. City Attorney Stern explained that there would have to be two questions on a ballot: 1) should the City go into the utility business? and 2) How should the City pay for it? He said in order to bring the AJ Water and the sewer company (both of which are special districts) into the City, the City would have to pay for the assets of both companies. The item will be heard at a future work session to begin that educational process.

The League of Arizona Cities and Towns annexation document is available online at www.ajcity.net/DocumentCenter/View/15808. Also available online are the complete minutes of the February 11 meeting as well as agendas for future public meetings. Visit <https://apachejunction.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> for documents.

The next Apache Junction City Council meeting will be on Feb. 21, 2017 at 7p.m. Meetings are held in the Council Chamber at 300 E. Superstition Blvd., in Apache Junction.

Letters to the Editor continued from A-7

Let's work together

The Apache Junction community is one of the most compassionate, tight-knit areas anywhere. We have seen so often how the community bands together to support one of its own, for an important cause or to right a wrong. This community, like many, is made up of a menagerie of people. So many people find this area appealing no matter what walk of life they may have come from. I would like to think that our diversity is one of the reasons that makes the community so great. It's a combination of different backgrounds, experiences and lifestyles living and working together in a beautiful setting. So whether they ride bikes, wear cowboy hats or have license plates from other states, all are welcome and make up this great community. I hope we can respect all the different members of the Apache Junction family and show the world just how well we can all get along - no matter their belief or practice.

As such, we draw visitors from all over the country and beyond to visit the spectacular Superstition Mountains and hit the trails. They also patronize our businesses, adding important support to our infrastructure. That is an important issue to consider at all times of the year in the place we call home.

I ask that we all keep this in mind as we greet each other on the street or in a store. Because only together can we continue to make Apache Junction the greatest place to live, to raise a family, and to work. So let's go out and build our future together.

Jeff Struble, Councilmember, City of Apache Junction

Monday, Feb 20 Mexican Mondays 11am-2:30pm	Tuesday, Feb 21 Lunch 11am-1:30pm Post Bingo 2pm Burgers/Fritters 5-7pm Shifty Differs 5-9pm	Wednesday, Feb 22 Lunch 11am-1:30pm Auxiliary Member Appreciation Event 3-5pm
Thursday, Feb 23 Thirsty Thursday Lunch 11am-1:30pm w/Rave On's Karaoke w/Todd 6-10pm		
Friday, Feb 24 Cheepwich Lunch 11am-1:30pm Cattish/Cod/Shrimp Basket 5-7pm Bobby Cook Jamoke 5-9pm	Saturday, Feb 25 Ribeye Steak, Shrimp Dinner, Chicken Tenders 5-7pm Rave On's 5-9pm	Sunday, Feb 26 EXPRESS BREAKFAST 9:30am-12:30pm Members Hold'em 12pm Aux Bingo 4pm

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