

PROGRESS IN WARD I: BUILDING A BETTER TUCSON

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A MESSAGE FROM COUNCILOR ROMERO

DECEMBER 2010

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The best gift we can give each other this holiday season is hope for a bright future for Tucson. Since I announced my Economic Development Recovery Plan in November, I've met with many diverse leaders to announce a renewed commitment by the City to encourage small business, stimulate economic growth and share our local successes. This newsletter is dedicated to **building a better Tucson**.

On December 7, Mayor and Council unanimously endorsed my plan to create a model small business forum to stimulate business development in Tucson. Workshops will be held in each ward to reach out to local businesses and provide a one-stop, full service learning center. Small businesses would learn how to do business with the City of Tucson and how to start a business in the City, including meeting with lenders. Key city staff and small business commission leaders would learn what small businesses need. We also unanimously supported a plan to work with the Small Business Commission to increase participation in the Small Business Enterprise Program and to amend the procurement code to drive more local business into contracts with the City of Tucson.

In other news, the long-awaited Mercado San Agustin on West Congress and Avenida Del Convento had a soft opening **December 17-19** with a holiday market and bazaar. We welcome the Gadsden family's \$6.5 million investment in the Westside.

Lastly, the Southside's hottest hotdogs have been in the news a lot this year, with BK's and El Guero Canelo getting the attention they deserve. I am spotlighting S. 12th Avenue this coming year with volunteer cleanup crews, graffiti removal, and beautification for the corridor.

In Community,

Regina Romero

P.S. Happy Holidays from the Ward I family; Amy, Diana, Laura, Mac, and Vera!

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"QUOTEABLE"

"Within the next two years, the construction of Meridian Engineering's facility will begin. In a time of mostly bad economic news, this is a good news story for Tucson, one that would not have happened without the efforts of Councilor Romero," Meridian Engineering

DEVELOPMENTS

FBI JOINS THE BONITA STREET BUSINESS CORRIDOR



The QIP Development Team is constructing a new 85,000 square foot regional facility for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at 275 N. Commerce Park Loop. The FBI has outgrown its current rented space in three different facilities. The site was chosen in part due to its proximity to downtown and local amenities.

Construction began in October, with completion date set for January 2012. The 3-story class "A" office is designed to meet LEED Silver certification by the USGBC (United States Green Building Council). It will employ approximately 200 people and it will contribute millions in construction taxes for the City's general fund.

SIGN UP FOR THE SBE PROGRAM!

The City of Tucson will invest millions of dollars in the local economy this year. Councilor Romero helped revamp the Small Business Enterprise Program. Please take the time to become a registered vendor.

The SBE offers incentives to locally-owned businesses. Businesses must be headquartered in Pima County and owners must have a net worth less of than \$750,000. If you want to do business with the City please register as a vendor with the City's Procurement Department at <http://www.tucsonaz.gov/bsol/login.jsp> and apply for the program by contacting Bob Barton at 837-4021 or email Robert.Barton@tucsonaz.gov.



COUNCILOR ROMERO WORKING TO MAKE TUCSON #1 CITY FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Councilor Romero is pleased to incentivize and promote Tucson's prospects for strengthening its entrepreneurial economy. In November she announced her [Economic Development Recovery Plan](#) to promote job growth and economic development. Councilor Romero is bringing leaders from the community to study sessions to highlight partnerships with the City. You can watch study sessions live every Tuesday on [Channel 12](#).

Presentations include:

Small Business Model Forum- Councilor Romero is bringing together lenders, small businesses and city staff in economic development, sign code and procurement to share ideas and get the latest details on the city's efforts to improve doing business in and with the City.

On January 4, **Local First Arizona** will announce its 10 percent shift campaign to **buy local** to support city services. Of every \$100 spent at local businesses, \$45 will be reinvested in our local community, compared to \$13 at a national chain.

On January 11, **Arizona Board of Regents Rick Myers and Fred DuVal** will discuss investments in **workforce retention**. Local academic institutions are ground-zero for innovation, workforce training and developing technology and start-up business ventures.

On January 25 the **Desert Angel Investors** will highlight local companies in which they have **invested**, the **jobs created** and the potential for new partnerships with the city to **incentivize entrepreneurial efforts** in Tucson.

Still to be scheduled is **UA Provost Meredith Hay's** announcement of the University's new strategy for **technology licensing** and **commercialization**. Working under the UA Foundation, a new 501(c)(3) corporation will identify UA's best research prospects to **generate regional wealth** and **new jobs**. The fledgling entrepreneurs will be mentored and local businesses and financial professionals will assist, providing funding and other resources to facilitate the new business. The university's **\$600 million in annual research funding** is an investment in Tucson!

SPOTLIGHT: AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING FOR WEST END OF DOWNTOWN



Artist rendering of view from West Congress looking west.

\$25 MILLION SENIOR HOUSING GROUP TO ADD DIVERSITY AND DENSITY TO THRIVING URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD: COMING IN 2011 TO W. CONGRESS @ I-10

SMALL BUSINESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS: A YEAR IN REVIEW

These projects are underway or complete, as directed by Mayor and Council:

New website! <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/business>

Land Use Code Changes- encouraging well-designed, compatible infill development within the City to bring jobs and expand the tax base;

Certificate of Occupancy- Encourages businesses to locate in the City by making it easier to re-use existing buildings;

Customer Service- extended office hours at development services to improve customer satisfaction;

Overlay Zones- for the downtown core and the Downtown Links corridor to relax suburban codes to encourage mixed-use transit oriented development along major corridors;

Building Official Hired- New expertise, efficient project review and process improvements including field permitting and end-to-end inspections;

Green Building Progress- Promote creating and using healthier and more resource-efficient models of construction, renovation, operation, maintenance and demolition. Provides an optional "green building certification" to help promote Tucson businesses;

Downtown Project Management and Reporting System- Provide information to the private sector via a searchable website on development projects downtown

Improved Development Agreement Process- will improve and standardize the process of negotiating and executing development agreements between the City and private entities. We hope to leverage City-owned real estate and/or investments to generate private sector investment.

EXPANDED PARKING FOR TUMAMOC HILL WALKERS

Carondelet's St. Mary's Hospital and City Councilor Regina Romero announced last month that Carondelet's parking lot will be open to Tumamoc Hill walkers at the following times: Before 7:30 a.m. and after 5 p.m. These are the times that Tumamoc Hill is open to hill walkers. This is wonderful news for the Tumamoc Hill community! Thank you Carondelet!

S. 12TH AVE. CORRIDOR BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: BK CARNE ASADA & HOT DOGS

20 years ago, Benjamin Galaz sold his Sonoran-style hot dogs from a small cart on Tucson's south side. Today BK's Carne Asada and Hot Dogs has two locations and is developing an international following. Word of mouth publicity and the popularity of rediscovering regional foods is turning the area into a destination for food lovers. BK and other longtime South 12th Avenue proprietors are capitalizing on the trend. BK's success is helping to revitalize South 12th Avenue.

The incredible growth can be attributed to hard work and the traditional flavor of mesquite-grilled hotdogs. The Travel Channel's "Food Wars"

featured a show-down between BK's and fellow South 12th Avenue merchant, El Guero Canelo. BK took the trophy for Arizona's "Best Sonoran Hot Dogs." After the show's debut, business boomed as locals and visitors alike came to sample the winning taste of BK's hot dogs.

BK's national spotlight continues. In 2011 ABC's popular show "What Would You Do?" will feature a segment filmed at BK. Galaz's business is a true Tucson success story and a great partner in the local business community.

MERIDIAN ENGINEERING TO BUILD HEADQUARTERS IN WARD I



In 2005, Meridian Engineering Company, a 125-employee highway and industrial contractor with operations in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, began reviewing locations for a headquarters.

A vacant 27 acre parcel near the junction of Interstate 10 and Interstate 19 came on the market in 2006. Meridian decided to acquire the

property to construct a home office.

The land's proximity to the Santa Cruz River created some complications but also provided opportunities. Councilor Romero helped the company successfully move forward.

Neighbors on West 34th Street were supportive of Meridian's project from the beginning. The City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Department brought forward long range plans to continue construction of the popular pedestrian and bike trail along the Santa Cruz River adjacent to the property. The City also owns the land to the south of Meridian property, which the Audubon Society has identified as

being a large amphibian habitat. Ward I took on the roll of facilitator to bring all of these interests together.

After a series of neighborhood dialogues, solutions began to emerge.

The efforts have been fruitful. Within the next two years, the construction of Meridian Engineering's facility will begin. In a time of mostly bad economic news, this is a good news story for Tucson, one that would not have happened without the efforts of Councilor Romero, the City's Planning & Development Services staff, neighborhoods and non-profit partners.

COUNCILOR ROMERO HOSTS GRAFFITI ABATEMENT JANUARY 8TH

Ward I residents are invited to learn more about tackling graffiti in their neighborhoods and see a live demonstration of the MyTucson phone application on **January 8 from 8 a.m. to noon at BK's Hot Dogs, 5118 S.12th Ave.** At the graffiti cleanup event GPC will offer cleanup techniques, provide the necessary materials, and send neighbors back to their neighborhoods with the tools to keep their communities graffiti-free. MyTucson Smart Phone Application enables residents with iPhones and Android phones to send photos of graffiti directly to the City's Department of Transportation. The MyTucson application was developed by GPC at no cost to the City. BK and other local businesses are

providing free breakfast and lunch for all volunteers.

"This program gives residents the tools to take an active role in fighting graffiti," said Councilor Regina Romero. "By providing neighbors the training and tools to abate minor graffiti, we hope to create a sense of neighborhood ownership and pride among city residents."

To register or for more information please contact the Ward I at (520)791-4040 or ward1@tucsonaz.gov.

TUCSON SPECTRUM MALL IS RETAIL SUCCESS

Tucson Spectrum Mall, a 1 million square-foot retail center in Ward 1 at the southwest corner of I-19 and Irvington Road, celebrated its grand opening in 2008 as the largest open-air shopping center in Southern Arizona. Since then, Councilor Romero has pushed the City transportation staff to improve traffic flow at Irvington Rd. and I-19. A traffic study helped identify short and long term improvements that can be made to the intersection to reduce traffic concerns and facilitate movement through the area. Councilor Romero is coordinating collaboration with the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation Authority, and the City to see several phases of improvements implemented. These improvements include simple signal changes, restriping, concrete features that would funnel traffic through dedicated entry/exit points, extended turn lanes, and eventual widening of Irvington Rd. The mall has produced millions of dollars in sales tax to the community, and has created hundreds of jobs to help serve and sustain the many retailers within the mega-plaza.

A representative of Barclay Group, the development firm behind the massive outdoor marketplace, said research shows more than 300,000 potential shoppers live within a short drive of the retail site. Outside this immediate scope, thousands of visitors from Sahuarita, Green Valley, and northern Mexico visit the mall every year, with an estimated 76,000 vehicles passing by daily. As the first major commercial center encountered by visitors south of Tucson, this lucrative retail corridor along the I-19 helps infuse our City's economy with thousands of dollars in sales tax from outside the community.

On top of the retail destinations within the Spectrum Mall, Harkins Theaters recently opened within the plaza. The 81,000-square-foot, 18-screen cineplex continues to attract visitors from south of the city while making the mall a destination site for visitors, encouraging a longer stay at the mall and creating a "day-trip" destination.