

REPORT TO THE FOOTHILLS

Foothills residents gathered at Catalina Foothills High School Auditorium on February 25th at the Catalina Foothills Association sponsored forum, to hear a report from their service providers. Property alterations, public safety, water availability and fire protection were among the topics discussed.

Individual panel members each gave a presentation. At the conclusion of all the presentations, the floor was open to the audience for comments and questions.

Participants were:

Chuck Huckelberry, *Moderator*, Pima County Administrator

Les Caid, *Rural Metro Fire Dept.*, Chief

Carmine DeBonis, *Pima County Developmental Services*, Director

Dave Modeer, *Tucson Water Dept.*, Director

Lt. Tim Hughes, *Pima County Sheriff's Dept.*, Commander, Rincon Division

Aubrey Waingrow, *Waste Management*, District Manager

Kurt Weinrich, *Pima County Transportation Dept.*, Director

The forum provided an opportunity for Foothills residents to learn which Sheriff's Department district office provides law enforcement. The Rincon District Office at 8999 E. Tanque Verde Road responds to most of the calls in the Foothills, said district commander Tim Hughes. The dividing line is Campbell Avenue. West of Campbell to I-10 is serviced by the Foothills District Office on Shannon, north of Ina. Lt. Hughes told the audience that most Foothills calls are crimes against property.

Several questions from the audience centered around property alterations and lot splits. Many residents asked how they can get information when neighbors apply for permits to alter property. Jim Riley, President of the CFA, asked Carmine DeBonis, Director of Pima County Developmental Services, if the county could provide direct communication to homeowners associations when people obtain permits for property alterations. DeBonis replied that the county's web site has that information, but communication could be improved. Later during a sidebar discussion, DeBonis indicated the county will look into grouping permit information by zip code. He also reiterated that when residents make changes to their property that fall within county zoning laws, but outside the regulations of the homeowner's association, there is nothing the county can do legally. Just as it was pointed out in last years forum, Mr. DeBonis stated that a neighborhoods protective covenants are the only avenue in which residents can be assured that zoning changes won't alter their neighborhoods.

Other residents asked Dave Modeer, Director of Tucson Water, how Tucson's water supply can be maintained as the population rises while groundwater level drops. Modeer replied that although the groundwater level is dropping, the city does not yet need to start water rationing. That's because the city is continuing to work toward obtaining its full allocation of Colorado River water, which will replenish the groundwater level. He cautioned all residents to conserve their water usage and pointed out that 45% of water usage is outside, not inside the homes. On the subject of Colorado River water, Modeer pointed out that usage contracts were completed in the 1920's, hence California got the bulk of the allocation and sparsely populated states, such as Arizona at the time, received much less. Chuck Huckelberry noted that projections are that our water resources will be sufficient to service a population of 1.8 million people.

Curt Weinrich, Director of Pima County Transportation noted that the construction of River Road is proceeding as planned. The new bridge under construction over the Rillito River at Alvernon will then handle the bulk of the traffic, relieving the Campbell Avenue structure. The bridge on Dodge will be closed to vehicular traffic. This will have a negative impact on several businesses South of the bridge, but that can't be helped. The Dodge bridge was never meant to carry such loads, and is questionable if the Rillito floods.

Aubrey Waingrow, District Manager of Waste Management, noted that his company supplies over 80% of the garbage service for foothills residents. In response to a question from the floor, he acknowledged that his company is open to contracts with homeowners associations to maintain a guaranteed, and favorable, pricing structure. The cost of fuel has severally impacted the company as they currently use over 28,000 gallons of fuel a week for their fleet of trucks.