



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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(See Editor's Note below)

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Pinal County Residents Help Shape Future Of Superstition Vistas at Public Meetings Sept. 1 & 2

*Locals Learn About Four Possible Scenarios,
Give Instant Feedback on What Community Should Look Like*

PINAL COUNTY, AZ...With their grandchildren and their children in mind, residents of Pinal County and the East Valley will gather at two public meetings in September to help set the course for a 50-year unfolding of Arizona's largest and still undeveloped state trust land parcel – 275-square-mile Superstition Vistas situated in northeast Pinal County at the eastern edge of metropolitan Phoenix.

The meetings culminate an 18-month effort by a steering committee of diverse stakeholders and consultants to visualize four potential scenarios for Superstition Vistas and share them with area residents to get their feedback. Each of the four scenarios includes information about its economic development potential, housing and livability profile and environmental impacts.

The two meetings are scheduled for 6:00-8:00 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 1, at The Views at Superstition in Gold Canyon, and 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2, at the Anthem at Merrill Ranch Community Center in Florence. Those planning to attend should call the East Valley Partnership at (480) 834-8335 ext. 201, or Pinal Partnership at (480) 440-9482.

'Say No to Development as Usual'

“Superstition Vistas presents an extraordinary opportunity for Arizonans to say ‘no’ to development as usual,” said Mike Hutchinson, Superstition Vistas project manager. “Instead, we can take the time to plan a community over nearly half a century that showcases true sustainability – a vibrant local economy, housing choices, and conservation of water, energy and other resources. It's a blank slate where we can shape the future and provide an example for other regions.”

The 175,000-acre swath of land owned entirely by the Arizona State Land Department is roughly the size of Mesa, Chandler, Tempe and Gilbert combined. Its general boundaries extend from the Superstition Mountains Wilderness Area at its northern end south to Florence, and from the Pinal County line on the west to east of Florence Junction.

Economic Sustainability

“A strong local economy is a critical component of any sustainable community,” said Roc Arnett, president of the East Valley Partnership. “We need a balance of jobs, retail and housing that are located near one another so that people living in Superstition Vistas can spend less time driving to work or shopping and enjoy a higher quality of life.”

Attracting economic catalysts, such as a university or regional headquarters of a global business, could help jumpstart the local economy and actually create jobs ahead of housing, according to Heidi Schaefer, manager of corporate taxes for Salt River Project.

“Leading with jobs rather than housing requires significant up-front investment but provides high returns in the long term,” she stated. “It also demands that we invest the time needed to plan a sustainable 21st century community that will convince those economic drivers to locate here.”

Conserving Resources

In this model desert community, conserving water and energy will depend heavily on careful land-use planning and urban design as they pertain to housing, transportation and open space, said Jim Holway, director of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy-Sonoran Institute Joint Venture.

“Particularly with the housing mix, it’s hard to predict 50 years from now what homebuyer preferences will be,” he explained. “We also should remember that housing options change and communities redevelop over time, so that what Superstition Vistas offers in 2030 may look totally different 20 years later according to market demand.

“The bottom line is, for Arizonans, this provides an opportunity to create a vision of how we will grow as we approach our state’s centennial in 2012. What do we want our second century to look like? Superstition Vistas provides an opportunity to create a new urban center that can complement our region.”

To accomplish the comprehensive planning required for an area the size of Superstition Vistas, state law will need reforming to allow the State Land Department to implement strategic development and conservation plans, said Supervisor Bryan Martyn, Pinal County District 2.

“Without state trust land reform, we will have sprawling, piecemeal development of Superstition Vistas, and likely a lower return to the key beneficiaries of the state land trust – Arizona’s schoolchildren,” he explained. “We need to change laws governing the state trust land system to provide maximum economic benefit both to Pinal County residents and our schools.”

Lead sponsors of the Superstition Vistas Area Planning Project are SRP, Resolution Copper Mining and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy-Sonoran Institute Joint Venture. The consulting team is lead by Robert Grow of Robert Grow Consulting of Utah and John Fregonese of Fregonese Associates, Inc. of Portland, Oregon.

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(Editor’s Note: Download the Superstition Vistas Area Report and view four scenario videos at <http://superstition-vistas.org/>. For a CD with high-resolution videos, maps and photos, and further contact information, contact Jennifer Whalley at (602) 818-3216 (cell).