

Our Community needs Balanced, Water-wise, Sustainable Growth

The subject of growth in the quad-city communities has been a controversial issue over the past several years. Growth has surfaced as a key political issue as evidenced by the passage of Proposition 400 several years ago, and as demonstrated in recent municipal elections in Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Dewey-Humboldt.

Certainly, growth has brought its share of challenges with water, traffic and air quality principal among them. The old adage, “if one is not growing, one is dying”, is applicable to healthy communities such as ours. The challenge therefore is to strike a balance among these competing interests. As a region, we need to address these issues in an intelligent, reasonable fashion, recognizing that it is incumbent upon us to continue to grow and develop while preserving the natural and limited resources upon which we depend.

Central to the growth issue is the subject of water. A significant portion of Western Yavapai County is charged with achieving safe yield by the year 2025 – essentially ensuring that balance is established between the amount of water pumped from area aquifers and the amount that is recharged into those same aquifers. There are also concerns about water pumping from the Big Chino Water Ranch and its associated impacts to the headwaters of the Verde River. Various community task forces have been researching the issue of long term water pumping over the past several years, with conflicting reports surfacing regarding the potential impact of current and proposed water practices.

Central Arizona Partnership (CAP), a coalition of area business and civic leaders, is very concerned about the long-term ramifications of water policy, specifically as it relates to growth. Clearly, no one wants our communities to grow beyond the means of long-term sustainability, which includes ensuring an adequate water supply for all types of uses. CAP also recognizes the environmental, riparian, recreational and scenic beauty of the Verde River and its headwaters. In the past 2 months, CAP has hosted several forums regarding the water issue. We are committed to encouraging our local elected officials, economic development groups, the development community, environmental organizations and other stakeholders to assess the regional water issue based upon facts and reason. CAP will continue to sponsor events and bring relevant information to the forefront to support sound, prudent growth and long-term sustainability.

Our communities are dependent upon sustained, quality growth as an economic engine and as a driver of quality of life. None of our local communities will be able to offer employment prospects to our local citizens, tax revenues or amenities – entertainment, dining, shopping, or otherwise – unless we continue to grow and develop in an orderly, quality fashion. Simply put, the attractiveness of this region has been enhanced by many of the residential, retail, and employment projects developed over the past ten to fifteen years – additions to our communities that have improved our quality of life in many ways.