



It may be that they heard about a special on Thirstbusters, or perhaps it was the 99¢ hot dogs that drew their attention, but these five Ajo-area residents made a quick and energetic highway crossing last weekend on their way ... someplace. Jewel Clearwater photo

Ajo CofC gets a new executive

At Tuesday morning's meeting, Ajo District Chamber of Commerce members met Bety Allen, their new CofC executive director.

Allen, 39, was hired following a month-long search and a unanimous recommendation from search committee members.

"We are very excited to have Bety join us," said Cliff Hunter, CofC president. "She brings a lot of experience – particularly with border communities and business – and we look forward to this partnership as we move forward."

Allen was born and lived in Agua Prieta, Mexico, a community which shares the border with Douglas. She was involved with her family's jewelry business there and went on to earn a degree in business administration. She has more than 14 years of experience in sales, customer service, marketing, and management.

"I'm enthusiastic about the job, the challenges, and the opportunities ahead of us," said Allen, adding that volunteer development and regional marketing are two key goals.

Allen and her husband Rob lived in Montana before moving to Ajo and buying a home slightly



more than a year ago. She says they love the desert, and enjoy outdoor sports, and cooking for family and friends.

"When we first came to Ajo, we knew this was the place we wanted to be," said Allen. "It's a great community."

No election results were available

No results were available for the Tuesday, August 28, primary election, which was still in progress at presstime.

Winners in the primary election will face off in the November 6 general election. Registration cut-off for the general election is October 9; early voting will start October 11.

Links for the early ballot requests and election results are available at Pima County Election Department's homepage at www.pima.gov/elections online.

For voter registration information, go to the Pima County Recorder's Office website at www.recorder.pima.gov online. The website also has links for early ballot requests, voter totals, and more.

Plaza to get visit from tooth fairy

The tooth fairy is planning a visit to the Plaza from 2 to 4 p.m. this Wednesday, August 29. The staff of Desert Senita Community Health Center hopes parents and kids will join them in greeting her. Water games and prizes will help make the event fun for everyone, say event organizers.

Friday is cut-off for JP applicants

This is the last week to apply for Ajo's recently vacated Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace position. Applications, including the filing of financial disclosure forms, must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, August 31.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors is accepting letters of interest, resumes, and financial disclosure forms from individuals interested in being considered for appointment.

To be eligible, individuals must be 18 years of age or older at time of appointment, must be a resident of and registered to vote in the precinct; and must be a member of the same political party as the person vacating the office, in this case a Democrat.

The financial disclosure form and instruction manual are available on the Pima County homepage at www.pima.gov, by emailing the Clerk of the Board at COB_Mail@pima.gov, or by calling 520-724-8449.

The names of individuals seeking appointment will be posted on the Pima County homepage as submissions are received. As of presstime Monday evening, the only applicant of record was Walter Weber, although it is expected other applicants will be forthcoming. Comments in support or concern may be submitted to the Clerk of the Board at 130 W. Congress, 5th Floor, Tucson, 85701, or by email at the above address.

The position became open following the resignation of Maria Alviljar. The Pima County Board of Supervisors will make the appointment at its September 4 board meeting. The individual appointed will serve the remainder of the term through 2014.



Sports funding is big challenge

The school board recently voted to add two middle school sports but now must find funding.

During their July 26 meeting the Governing Board of the Ajo Unified District voted to add middle school football and volleyball to the school's extracurricular activities.

"There were several benefits explored by administration and the Board at the time of the approval of the additional athletic programs. "The bottom line was that this is good for students," remarked Superintendent Bob Dooley.

The vote creates some issues for Dooley and finance director Patricia Spencer. The 2012-2013 fiscal budget was adopted prior to the addition of the new programs. Board clerk Rose Cameron said, "We'll just have to raise the funds."

Cameron, local businesswoman Patti Bush, principal Brian MacKenzie, athletic director Brian English, and Dooley have organized a fundraising commit-

tee to attempt to get the money required by the addition of the new athletic programs.

"In round numbers, I think we should try to raise \$16,000," said Cameron.

The committee met this week to discuss possible fundraising options. Included in the discussion was the use of the Target Stores "red card" program for schools, tax credit donations specified for the school's athletic program, a possible mariachi concert presented by Pueblo High School followed by a Mexican food dinner in the school cafeteria, the traditional bake sales, and car washes. Donors of \$100 or more will receive special recognition by having their names placed on a plaque that will be displayed in the gymnasium.

The next meeting will be on August 30, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the District Board Room, 111 N. Well Road adjacent to the Superintendent's office. Visitors with ideas are very welcome to attend, said Dooley.

Clearance under 2nd Ave. bridge is deemed okay for now

When the new Second Avenue Bridge in Ajo was completed in 2007, it was designed with a 72-inch clearance, according to Chris Cawein, deputy director of the Pima County Regional Flood Control District. With the clearance under the bridge recently measured at 51 inches, a number of concerned local citizens felt it was time to sound the alarm.

Not so, says Cawein. He said that, in the view of the flood control district, less than 30% blockage is not a critical blockage.

"Although we acknowledge that there has been a slight reduction of carrying capacity under the bridge, the entire channel capacity has reset to a similar reduced level as well, and any flood event larger than about a 5- to 10-year storm event would overtop the Gibson Arroyo anyway, regardless of whether the bridge was maintained at the [originally designed level]," said Cawein. "The original intent for bridge construction – enhanced debris passage – has not been seriously compromised at this time."

Responding to inquiries about the elevated level of silt under the bridge, the county flood control district contracted out an initial dredge upstream of the bridge. A reported 400 cubic yards of sediment were removed on or prior to August 18. Further dredging under the bridge and downstream of it were delayed due to equipment limitations, said Cawein. The limited excavation was immediately seen by nearby residents as a potential mosquito hazard with the possibility of stagnant storm water forming a pond.

"Should such ponding occur before we can complete our Phase 2 dredging, it will be dealt with utilizing BTI tablet larvacide,"

noted Cawein. He added that Phase 2 will result in a pilot channel under the highest portions of the bridge arch, not a complete dredging from bank to bank. "It is anticipated that any large flows through the pilot channel will scour further the larger cross section under the bridge, and if only low flows occur they will result in a reset of the hydraulic grade line to what is natural for the entire Gibson Arroyo," he said.

Addressing the possibility of using gunite – a spray-on concrete substance – to firm up the soft banks south of the bridge, Cawein pointed out that, by policy and regulation, natural watercourses are to be preserved in their natural riverine conditions whenever possible. He said efforts to remove sediment can disrupt the natural transport of sediment, causing more significant bank erosion.

"Channel maintenance [such as dredging and gunite] can actually cause more harm than help," he said. "Usually the accumulation of sediment does not significantly alter the 100-year floodplain limits. Bank erosion [near the bridge] was not significant enough to necessitate the armoring of the banks."

Armoring banks can also have a negative impact by disrupting sediment balance, according to Cawein.

"This may cause more severe erosion at another location, and increase the speed of flow in downstream areas," he said. "Then, before you know it, you've created a system that requires more engineering, bank stabilization, and grade controls, yet the extensive financial resources to complete those activities are most often not available."

Ajo firefighters receive no funds from fire district

Chief David Tibbitt of Ajo/Gibson Volunteer Fire Department said he felt a report about tax rates in last week's issue of the *Ajo Copper News* might mislead some readers into thinking AGVFD receives fire district tax funds.

"The only department close to Ajo that gets fire district tax money is Why Fire," said Tibbitt, "and they only get money when the people out there pay their taxes."

Simply put, there is no fire district established for Ajo hence AGVFD receives no fire district tax funds, Tibbitt reiterated.