



**13th Annual  
PINAL COUNTY  
TOWN HALL**

**2000 Official Report**

**April 26-28, 2000**

**Holiday Inn**

777 N. Pinal

Casa Grande, AZ 85222

Sponsored by the  
**Pinal County Development Board**



**Pinal County Town Hall**

**Charting Our Future**

**OFFICIAL  
REPORT  
2000**

**Approved By the Pinal County Development Board**



# Summary Report

**"The fact is folks, if you don't  
like change, you're going to  
get run over by the train,  
because it's all we have."**

**- J. Mac Holladay**



# Summary Report of the 13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PINAL COUNTY TOWN HALL

April 26-28, 2000

## I. Introduction

One hundred twenty seven delegates from throughout Pinal County attended the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Pinal County Town Hall. The delegates gathered at the Casa Grande Holiday Inn to address the topic “**Charting Our Future**”. Participants heard from a variety of speakers and “talk show” panelists, including the keynote speaker J. Mac Hollady. Mr. Hollady, CEO for Market Street Services, spoke on the topic “**Our Changing World: New Realities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**”. In addition delegates had the opportunity to hear Mary Jo Waits, Acting Director of the Morrison Institute speak on “**The New Economy: Characteristics and Implications**”.

Among the delegates were fifteen youth delegates from area high schools. The second annual **Pinal County Outstanding Youth of the Year** recognition program recognized five outstanding youth nominated by their high schools. The students recognized from the participating high schools included: Sasha Martos – Apache Junction, Michael Moreno – Casa Grande, Carmen Melero – Kearny, Bridget Shea, San Manuel and Suzanne Peterson, Coolidge. **Judges selected Suzanne Peterson as the 2000 Pinal County Outstanding Youth of the Year.** All honorees received an engraved pen and yearly scheduler, while the outstanding youth of the year also received a \$500 scholarship to be applied to future education and or training.

The fourth annual **Constellations Awards** with the slogan of “**It takes a Constellation of Stars to Make a Community Shine**”, were presented to two recipients from Pinal County. The winners and categories included:

- **Community Outreach Inc., of SaddleBrooke** was honored as a “non-profit organization that made a significant contribution to improving the quality of life in its community”.
- **Ruben Perez** of Oracle, was honored as “an individual who has demonstrated through volunteerism that one person can make a difference”.

Each honoree received from Janet Beronio, General Manager of Harrah’s Ak Chin Casino, a limited edition crystal star and a “check” for \$2,500 in charitable donations made in their honor. The Constellation Awards are sponsored by Harrah’s Ak Chin Casino, Casa Grande Valley Newspapers, Inc. and Pinal County Town Hall.

The **extraordinary relationship** that existed this year between the **Town Hall Advisory Committee and Arizona Public Service** in a collaborative effort to plan and carry out this years Town Hall was a key factor in successfully dealing with this comprehensive topic. The **report that follows** is a compilation of the respective discussion group reports as summarized by Sally Odette, CED, Community Development Consultant from APS.

This report is being distributed to delegates, town hall partners and libraries as is customary, but will also be made available to other groups and organizations identified in the report. **An addendum report from each of the six discussion groups has been reproduced as an additional resource document. This report may be utilized by individuals, organizations, commissions or committees for respective follow-up activities.** This addendum report will be made available to county libraries as well as the CAAG office. Individuals or groups may request a copy by contacting SunWest Educational Associates at 520-836-2065.

## **II. Regional Analysis**

Town hall participants were divided into six (6) working groups. A facilitator led each group and a recorder compiled notes during each breakout session. There were four discussion sessions conducted in one and a half days for each group.

### **A. Our Progress & Future Course**

#### **1. Looking at the state of Pinal County's economic vitality.**

Many of the participants from all of the working groups agreed the current economic status compared to 5 years ago found the following to exist:

- The Northern part of the County has improved
- The Copper Basin area has problems
- Region is mostly dependent on a few industries
- Lower unemployment rate
- Need for more diversity, high tech and educational opportunities
- Dollars are circulating more often in the region
- An increase of winter visitors and tourists
- Housing costs have increased
- A continued blending of two age groups – young families and retired households
- Most of the communities are involved in strategic planning

#### **2. Regional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) analysis.**

The combined results of the group's SWOT analysis lead to the following top ranked issues.



- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Leadership
- Inequality of education
- Lack of commitment to work together as a whole county
- Failure to recognize the potential of the youth
- Agriculture is fading and economic diversity is growing
- Disparity of economic prosperity (mine closures vs. high income development)
- Switching to a homeowner tax base
- E-commerce
- Technological changes with traditional industries

## **B. Looking into the Future**

### **1. Characteristics of Success in the future**

- All citizens will be proud and participating in the public process
- We will have learned from the past
- Diverse employment opportunities
- We will not look like Phoenix or Tucson
- Look well planned with open spaces
- There will be community and county-wide cooperation
- A good transportation network & coordination
- The youth will be involved
- Everyone will be working and mutually supportive
- Teachers will have good salaries

### **2. What should be changed to be successful?**

- Thinking more regionally
- Better County representation at the State Legislature
- Setting and working towards wider County goals
- Better cooperation with Maricopa and Pima County's
- Having a balance of development throughout the County
- A diversified economy
- Pervasive accessibility to information systems – an increase in fiber optics and infrastructure
- Less retail leakage

## **III. Devising a Method to Move Ahead**

### **A. Regional Sectors Defining Economic Vitality**

What is a Sector? A sector is defined in this report as a regional issue which could encourage or complement the region's economic vitality. Each group identified and prioritized sectors and developed mini visions for each group's top three. Most of the groups then discussed preliminary indicators to measure overall progress to lead the county communities in forging into the New Economy and improving the overall region for the future.

**The four most significant sectors rising to the top of the waters were:**

- ❖ **Education**
- ❖ **Transportation Issues**
- ❖ **Natural Resources/Conservation**
- ❖ **Healthcare**

The chart on the next two pages captures the essence of this discussion.

**Strengths - in order of priority (those things over which there is local control)**

**Central Arizona College**

**Availability of land and open space**

Location

Limited competition

Public private partnerships

Quality of life

Planning & attitudes

**Weaknesses – in order of priority (those things over which there is no local control)**

**Education issues (lack of technical/vocational training & standards are inferior to surrounding counties)**

**Lack of a qualified skilled workforce**

School drop-out rate

Lack of transportation

Teen pregnancy

Lack of support businesses/services

**Opportunities – in order of priority (those things over which there is no control but could positively impact the region)**

**Location**

**Reasonable priced land and room to grow**

Climate

Natural resources

Quality of life

Expansion of education system

Encouragement of communication between all education levels

Communication with the Tribes

The youth in the County

**Threats – in order of priority (those things over which there is no control that could negatively impact the region)**

**AZ State Legislature (lack of local representation and State mandates without funding)**

**Environmental issues**

Lack of bandwidth

Natural resources threatened by growth

Legislative representation & lack of education support

Growth, wildcat subdivisions

Metropolitan area encroachment

**3. County characteristics indicating Pinal County is economically healthy and those that indicate otherwise.**

The groups offered many characteristics about the region as part of this first discussion area. Cited below are the **prioritized** conclusions.

Healthy characteristics

- **Growth in population and development in certain areas**
- Increase in tourism
- Presence of higher education & educational opportunities
- Communities taking charge through strategic planning efforts (Focused Future)
- Rising wages at prisons causing other industries to raise wages
- Demographics changing – increasing certain retailers to consider area
- Teen pregnancy rate has dropped since 1994
- Decrease in unemployment rate
- Comprehensive planning

Unhealthy characteristics

- **School drop-out rate/teen pregnancy**
- Regional image
- Mine closures
- Lack of skilled/technical jobs
- Low paying jobs
- Underemployment

**4. Identified global trends and/or changes that may impact the economic vitality of the County in the next 5-10 years.**

- Explosive residential growth
- As a bedroom community (unbalanced economy)
- Demographic shifts: earlier retirees, more active seniors, wealthier seniors
- Need for fiber optics
- Gazelle companies
- Education – 4 year degrees online and lifelong learning
- Opportunities for increasing communications through technology
- Free trade as a negative

**5. Reasons Pinal County will or will not attain economic vitality during the next 5-10 years.**

- State Legislature

	<i>Group 1</i>	<i>Group 2</i>	<i>Group 3</i>
<b>SECTORS</b>	Education, Infrastructure, Medical Facilities and Personnel	Education, Healthcare and Provision of Mental Healthcare, and Rural Transportation Issues	Education, Hi-Tech Infrastructure Development, Inter-Modal Transportation
<b>MINI VISIONS</b>	<p><u>Education:</u> To provide equality in education for each student, not only in Pinal County but throughout Arizona.</p> <p><u>Infrastructure:</u> To develop City/County relationships that anticipates the building of infrastructure that provides roads and streets, communications, utilities, parks, sidewalks, landscaping, etc., and build partnerships where the community controls growth and at the same time optimizes economic development.</p> <p><u>Medical facilities and personnel:</u> Medical services are available to all county residents within a 15 minute time span for emergency needs.</p>	<p><u>Education:</u> Access to a quality education with accountability on the part of students, parents, school and the community.</p> <p><u>Healthcare:</u> All county residents will have access to timely, affordable, universal basic health services for preventative critical, routine and alternative healthcare.</p> <p><u>Transportation:</u> All citizens of Pinal County would have accessible affordable transportation for work, health and school.</p>	<p><u>Education:</u> To have all high school students graduate with the ability to pursue higher educational goals or to pursue a vocation track.</p> <p><u>Hi-Tech Infrastructure Development:</u> To have education programs to prepare students for the hi-tech environment.</p> <p><u>Inter-Modal Transportation:</u> A comprehensive system linking the whole country, north/south/east and west.</p>
<b>INDICATORS</b>	Better cooperation with Maricopa and Pima Counties, setting and working towards county-wide goals. Having a balance in development throughout the county, to have improved medical services and adequate access for all residents within the county.	Percentage of ACCESS and ALTEX = a factor vs the population. Use the formula for a number of years. Define the basic level of emergency care and office visits. Graduation percentages, standardize test scores, classroom size - teacher to student ratio, higher education facilities, number of teachers staying, flexibility in college curriculum, responsiveness to job market. Rider miles, corporate sponsorships, rider satisfaction, absentee rates, and scheduling of routes.	80 - 90% graduation rate, ratings with national education scores, Youth graduate with a certain set of skills. Increased tax base, new set of economic indicators for employment, ratio of developed land vs undeveloped land, median income - income spectrum.

	<b>Group 4</b>	<b>Group 5</b>	<b>Group 6</b>
<b>SECTORS</b>	Educational Opportunities, Comprehensive Planning, Information Systems with Pervasive Accessibility	Education, Crime and Water	Balanced/Diversified Economy, Conservation of Natural Resources/Preservation of Open Space, and Education
<b>MINI VISIONS</b>	<u>Education:</u> Students are empowered to learn, teachers are empowered to teach.	<u>Education:</u> To provide the ability for each child to be excited about reading and writing and pursue continuing life education.	<u>Balanced/Diversified Economy:</u> To establish a balanced and diverse economy based on good relationships between communities, sustainable development, education and diverse workforce and planned growth and preservation.
	<u>Comprehensive Planning:</u> The County must plan at intervals and continually re-evaluate the plan utilizing citizen input.	<u>Crime and Water:</u> To provide economically viable sustainable development in Pinal County with specific emphasis on education, water needs, unemployment, public infrastructure and health needs.	<u>Conservation of Natural Resources and Open Space:</u> Conserve through limited growth, use of code enforcement, recycling programs which would encourage positive growth and tourism.
	<u>Pervasive Accessibility to Information Systems:</u> Pinal County must be connected technologically so that all its citizens, regardless of geographic and economic barriers will have access.		<u>Education:</u> To provide quality educators through competitive wages who are capable of education students to their highest potential.
<b>INDICATORS</b>	There is a responsible entity for implementation of visions. Use of a web site or other technology to connect people. A reporting system such as CAAG, Greater Casa Grande Economic Development Foundation or some other alliance.	The citizens of Pinal County will provide for all community members the necessary components to empower communities with the capacity to accomplish meaningful and positive outcomes for diverse age and ethnic groups, at a local and regional level in relation to a quality of life with regard to education, healthcare, transportation, employment, housing and recreation.	No indicators developed from this group.

## **IV. Key Players**

Success will depend on the cooperation and collaboration of many groups and individuals. The following were identified by Town Hall participants as having key roles:

Board of Supervisors	City/Town Councils
Private companies	Students (all levels)
Citizens	Special interest groups
Seniors	Civic groups
Chambers of Commerce	Economic Development organizations
Utility companies	Banks
CAAG	Pinal County Development Board
Non profit organizations	Churches
County staff	Planning and Zoning
Tribal leaders	AZ State Legislature
Pinal County School Boards	

## **IV. Strategies for Civic Participation**

The Town Hall process is one opportunity to engage in meaningful citizen participation. Town Hall delegates identified the following activities to broaden and deepen civic engagement in Pinal County.

- Create opportunities for open discussions by both sides of issues and challenges facing the county, involve all age groups in committees and discussion
- Develop involvement in the school systems
- Get to know the leaders as individuals
- Hold sub-regional town halls (topic specific)
- County needs better communication with the Southeast part of the County
- Explore a county focused future approach to planning
- Inform civic groups of town hall outcomes
- Use the media to inform the public
- Intergovernmental agreements
- Use internet, PSA announcements at theaters, news articles
- Include CAAG as a point of coordination
- Board of Supervisors could appoint a committee to create a strategic plan for the County. Representation could include all chambers of commerce, city councils, educators, clergy, students, seniors, non-profits, businesses
- Share information through e-mail throughout the county
- Share focused future projects
- Develop a town hall web site and integrate through the library system
- Link libraries, newspapers, chambers of commerce

## **VI. Group commitment**

Eight-seven percent (87%) of the participants attending Town Hall personally committed their efforts to future collaboration of this Town Hall outcome. Each volunteered to further develop ongoing strategies and mechanisms to advance the sectors and indicators. The discussions at the 2000 Town Hall scratched the surface of all the topics, but raised the awareness and sparked interest for follow-up.

## **VII. Town Hall General Recommendations**

- A. **It is recommended** that Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG), serve as a coordination point and link with other key county organizations such as:

**Pinal County Governmental Alliance  
City and County Governments**

Furthermore delegates to the 2000 Pinal County Town Hall should be invited to participate in scheduled planning meetings.

- B. **It is recommended** that the Town Hall report be distributed not only to delegates and partners, but to other key groups such as:

**Civic Groups  
School Boards  
Pinal County Development Board  
Chambers of Commerce  
Main Street Programs  
Economic Development Entities  
Media (print, television, radio)  
Internet (linking web sites)**

- C. **It is recommended** that delegates from the 2000 Town Hall (and others) be involved in Pinal County General Plans and implementation strategies.
- D. **It is recommended** that regional topic specific, mini town halls be conducted throughout the county based on the highly ranked sectors identified at town halls. Examples of some of the sectors identified include:

**Education  
Public Transportation  
Natural Resources/Conservation  
Health Care**



- E. **It is recommended** that delegates follow-up on the personal commitments they identified in their respective discussion groups

## **VIII. Conclusion**

Delegates are to be commended for their commitment and openness in the laborious, but exciting task of dealing with the many issues and uncertainties of **“Charting Our Future”**. It is clear from the deliberations, that while delegates found many strengths and opportunities to build on, there exist also some serious issues and limitations that need our specific attention in the months and years ahead. A number of these are currently being addressed through a variety of entities and processes, however, **these and all others will need the collective and individual civic participation stressed in the report.**

The report should be useful to many of the **“key players”** indicated in the report as they strive to complete their respective area and community planning efforts. **Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG)** already heavily engaged in planning, agreed to function as a **“point of coordination”** in the communication and follow-up efforts relating to this report. General plan updates are underway in many communities and others will soon be initiated. A number of communities have completed **“focused future”** plans or are currently involved in the process. Communication efforts, including utilization of web sites, e-mail, and various media approaches will also receive continuing attention. **The Town Hall Advisory Committee will be carefully reviewing the report for consideration of the 2001 and 2002 annual Pinal County Town Hall topics.** Mini town halls/community forums on specific issues (sectors) may be scheduled where useful and appropriate.

This report, while not a blue print or cookbook, should provide the stimulation and direction for all of us to productively engage ourselves in the serious matter of **“Charting Our Future”**. **The question remains – if we don’t who will?**

**“Change is debilitating when done to us, but exhilarating when done by us”**

**Rosabeth Moss Kanter**



# **Partners in Economic Progress**

**"Quality community development is the  
foundation of economic development. It is much  
more than the infrastructure of the community.  
It is about new jobs, schools, etc."**

**J. Mac Holladay**

## **PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC PROGRESS**

It is through the collective efforts of both the public sector and the private sector that the Pinal County Town Hall has been made possible. The Town Hall Advisory Committee expresses appreciation to the following organizations for their financial support of the Thirteenth Annual Pinal County Town Hall as well as their participation and interest in this county-wide endeavor.

### ***PINAL COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS***

Special appreciation is extended to the **Pinal County Board of Supervisors\*** for its continuing commitment and financial support for the Pinal County Town Hall.

### ***COMMUNITY PARTNERS***

#### **MAJOR:**

City of Apache Junction\*  
City of Casa Grande\*  
City of Coolidge\*  
City of Eloy\*  
Town of Florence\*

#### **SUSTAINING**

Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce\*  
Arizona City Chamber of Commerce\*  
Copper Basin Chamber of Commerce\*  
Eloy Chamber of Commerce\*  
Greater Casa Grande Chamber of Commerce\*  
Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce  
Pinal/Gila Behavioral Health Association, Inc.  
SMOR Tri-Community Chamber of Commerce\*  
Town of Kearny\*  
Town of Superior\*

## **CORPORATE AND BUSINESS PARTNERS**

### **MAJOR:**

Abbott Laboratories, Ross Products Division\*  
Arizona Public Service \*  
Casa Grande Valley Newspapers, Inc.\*  
Casa Grande Regional Medical Center\*  
Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino  
Saddlebrooke Development Company  
US WEST Communications\*

### **SUPPORTING:**

Goodman Ranch Associates  
The Paladin Group  
SunWest Educational Associates, Inc.\*  
Waste Management of Pinal County

### **SUSTAINING:**

A Bar Z Reality and Contractors  
Arizona Water Company\*  
ASARCO, Inc. - Ray Complex\*  
Bank of Casa Grande Valley\*  
Cindy's Workforce  
Community First National Bank  
DBK, Inc.  
the Dolly Steamboat  
Abe W. Dye  
Fast Stop Convenience Stores\*  
Fidelity National Title Agency of Pinal County  
First American Title Insurance Agency of Pinal County\*  
Garrett Motors\*  
Goldfield Ghost Town & Mine Tours, Inc.  
Lee's Apparel  
The Mahoney Group\*  
Minit Market  
Pro Plaques of Arizona  
Shope's, IGA  
Southwest Gas Corporation\*  
Tortilla Flat  
TRICO Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Your Broker Connection

\* Partners for ten or more years

## **DOOR PRIZES**

Appreciation is extended to the following organizations and individuals for providing this year's delegate door prizes.

Abbott Laboratories, Ross Products Division

Arizona City Golf Club

Arizona Public Service

Desert Travel

the Dolly Steamboat

Don Donnelloy Stables

ECO One Earth Products

Goldfield Ghost Town and Mine Tours, Inc.

Dr. Stan Griffis

John and Cherie McGlynn

SaddleBrooke Resorts Community

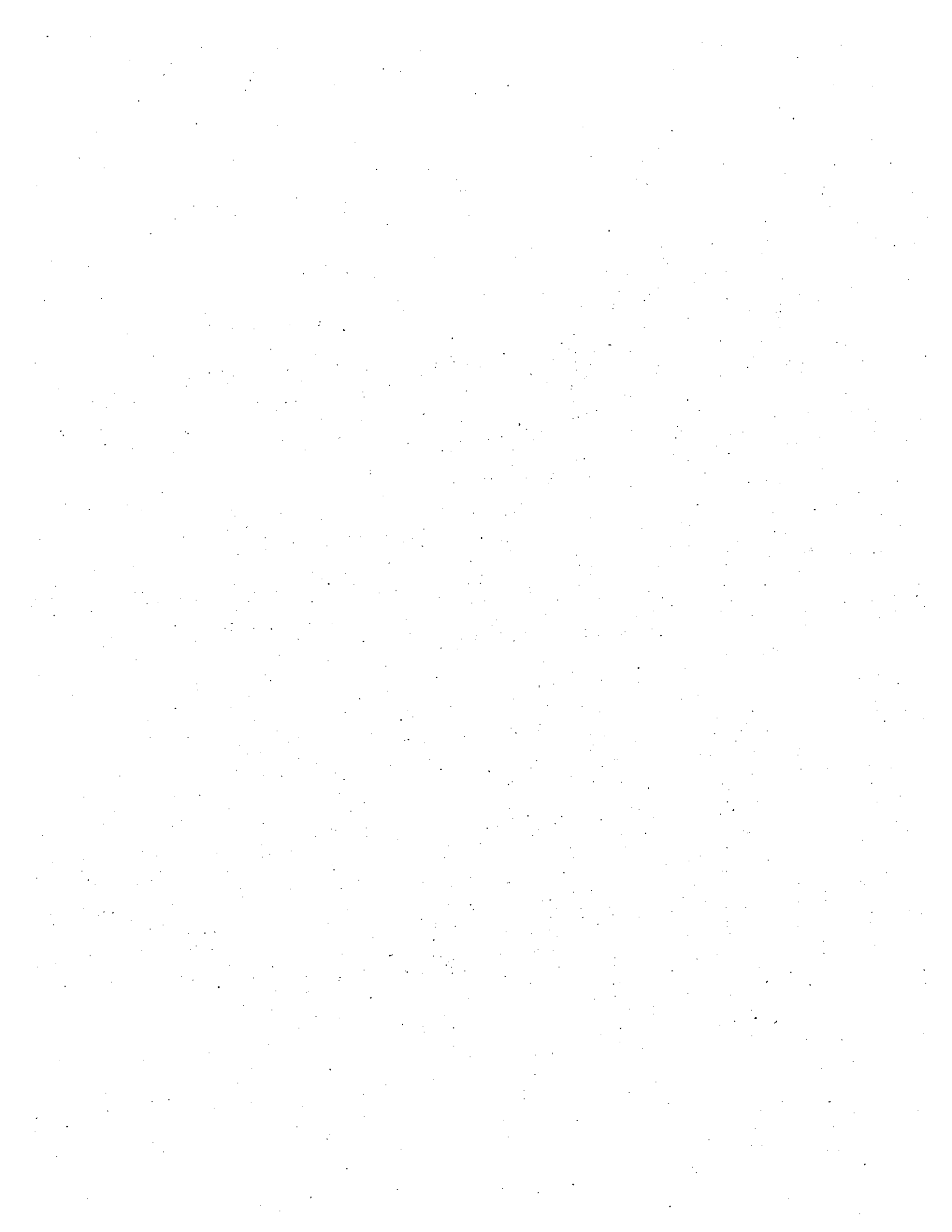
SunWest Educational Associates, Inc.

The Little Barrel - Donna Kerr

# **Delegate Directory**

**In other words, the "new economy"  
is defining what life in the  
21st century will be.**

**- Mary Jo Walts**





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**Directory of Pinal County Town Hall Delegates****April 26-28, 2000**

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