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CITIES AND TOWNS FUELING ARIZONA’S ECONOMIC ENGINE AS STATE RECOVERS

PHOENIX (March 20, 2012) – With Arizona’s economy starting to grow again, cities both large and small are proving themselves vital to Arizona’s recovery and future prosperity. The signs of momentum in Arizona’s economy include vacant office space filling up, exciting new workforce development and public-private partnerships to attract business to downtowms.

“Cities and towns are the economic engines of Arizona,” said Mayor Doug Von Gausig, president of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns. “From Tucson to Phoenix, to rural towns like Clarkdale – where I’m proud to serve as mayor – we’re seeing Arizona cities and towns provide healthy economic environments. This type of business-friendly climate is what’s driving Arizona forward.”

Below are some recent highlights and economic development success stories for Arizona cities and towns:

- In Tempe, office vacancy has dropped to 16 percent – four points below the Valley’s 20.6 percent vacancy rate. That makes Tempe one of the hottest commercial and retail markets in the state. And, according to the East Valley Tribune, 48 new businesses have opened on Mill Avenue, dropping Tempe’s downtown vacancy rate from 32.4 percent to 20.5 percent.

- The city of Chandler recently announced two exciting workforce development partnerships with Arizona State University and the University of Arizona that will make its downtown a new hub of higher education. ASU will soon bring a dynamic new Innovation Center to downtown. This partnership with the College of Technology and Innovation at ASU Polytechnic Campus will house world-class high-tech research and industry programs for those who want to take classes -more-
closer to home or their workplace. In addition to the Innovation Center, Chandler is also partnering with the UofA to offer Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) teaching instruction and other courses at downtown Chandler Community Center.

- Flagstaff will soon welcome a new manufacturer and 40 high-paying jobs, beating out Las Vegas and St. George, Utah, for the French-based LaCroix Group. LaCroix manufactures plastic packaging for refrigerated and frozen foods and has leased a 40,000-square-foot facility on Route 66. Flagstaff’s proximity to California, the railroad and Interstates 40 and 17 were key selling points, according to the Economic Collaborative of Northern Arizona (ECoNA).

- Scottsdale’s new Infill Incentive District is beginning to spur economic development in the city’s core in and around downtown. The City Council created the district in 2010 to allow property owners downtown to request amended development standards for aspects like height, intensity and density, in exchange for public benefits like investment in public art, infrastructure improvements and other public amenities. New proposals under the new infill district include the 749-unit Blue Sky apartment complex and the 160-unit ST Residential’s Safari; an expansion of the U.S. Egg Restaurant and a 781-unit condominium development built by Optima DCH Development.

- The town of Gila Bend recently announced that Calgon Carbon Corporation will build a new multi-million-dollar water treatment plant. The plant will employ 25 people and has the potential to expand to 62 within three years. Working with the Arizona Commerce Authority and the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Gila Bend’s innovative fast-track permitting process was important to securing the deal because it allows the plant to become fully operational at a faster pace.

About the League:
The League of Arizona Cities and Towns is a voluntary association of all the 91 incorporated cities and towns in the state of Arizona. It provides policy and legislative advocacy, information and inquiry services, along with publications and educational programs to strengthen the quality and efficiency of municipal government. It was founded in 1937 to serve the interests of cities and towns and to preserve the principles of home rule and local determination. For more information, visit www.azleague.org.

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