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CITIES AND TOWNS PLEDGE TRANSPARENCY IN BUDGET PROCESS
Municipalities unveil new tools for making fiscal plans more accessible to taxpayers

PHOENIX (March 26, 2013) – Ahhh, springtime in Arizona: baseball, beautiful weather ... and budgets?

Yes, for Arizona’s cities and towns, spring also means it’s time for employees to roll up their sleeves and get to work on next year’s local budgets.

Cities and towns are constantly striving to make the budget process more open and transparent for residents, whether it’s through increased public outreach or by using innovative Web-based tools that help shine a light on municipalities’ expenses and revenues.

Even though Fiscal Year 2014 doesn’t start until July 1, municipalities are already working hard to analyze revenues and expenditures to maintain current service levels without increasing costs. Unlike our federal government, Arizona cities and towns are required by state law to pass balanced budgets.

Below is a sampling of how municipalities are making the budget process more accessible to taxpayers – and how some communities are being recognized for their efforts:

Clarkdale – The town of Clarkdale became the first municipality in the state to provide comprehensive reporting of all revenues and expenditures on Arizona’s transparency website, www.openbooks.az.gov.

Cottonwood – The city of Cottonwood has received 13 Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards, and is currently seeking its 14th award. The city has on its “Transparency Page,” links to reports showing how revenues and expenses are managed. Residents may also log onto its “Annual Budgets” page that will show how the budget makes its way from proposed to final adoption.

Glendale – Residents can track the city of Glendale’s budget through a comprehensive tool on its website, known as “Follow Your Money.” This tool allows users the ability to “track” the city’s expenses and revenues to see clearly what’s coming in and what’s going out. Check it out at www.glendaleaz.com/FollowYourMoney.

Scottsdale – The Association of Government Accountants awarded the city of Scottsdale with a “Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting,” for its four-page “Report to Our Citizens” report, which was praised as a visually appealing and understandable document that exhibits transparency. For more information, and a comprehensive outline of the budget proposal, visit http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/finance.

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2-2-2/Cities prepare FY14 budgets

Tempe – The city of Tempe has started having public meetings on formulating its operating and capital budgets for next fiscal year. The city is also in the midst of planning for the expiration of the additional sales tax approved by voters in 2010. To give your input on the budget process, and to view budget presentation documents and a schedule of upcoming budget meetings, visit www.tempe.gov/budgetplan.

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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