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CITIES AND TOWNS COMMITTED TO TRANSPARENCY

PHOENIX (July 1, 2013) – Arizona’s cities and towns believe it is important for all citizens to have ready access to finance and public policy information. As voluntary levels of government created by the people who live in them, Arizona’s cities and towns are committed to staying accountable to those they represent.

Whether it’s designing websites that give citizens a closer look at municipal finances or engaging community members to ensure they have a voice in the decision-making process, cities and towns are dedicated to operating open governments.

“It is essential that residents who live in our communities across the state have ample information about municipal business that potentially impacts their lives,” said Clarkdale Mayor Doug Von Gausig, president of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns. “We recognize and appreciate that an informed citizenry makes for better policy-making and, ultimately, better government services.”

Highlights of cities and towns’ transparency efforts:

- Chandler’s [website](#) recently received high marks from the Sunshine Review, a nonprofit group whose mission involves transparency in local and state government. Of the more than 6,000 government websites that were ranked, Chandler was one of only 214 municipalities to receive an A+ ranking. It was an honor bestowed to Chandler for the third consecutive year.
- Yuma creates transparency between government and residents through a collection of key communication materials. Each week, city staff members and community leaders can be heard on their own local radio show, [City News Thursday](#), where residents are encouraged to listen about issues pertaining to city services and call-in with feedback. Yuma has also created the [City Bookshelf](#), a website where some of the most important budget and planning documents are available to be viewed or downloaded.

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- Gilbert has recently developed a “[digital newsroom](#)” to make the experience of viewing and sharing video faster and more accessible by allowing video on-demand, live video streaming options and HD video downloads. The town also is using mobile technology, known as SPARK App League, to engage residents. The app, <http://www.sparkappleague.com>, is a partnership with ASU’s College of Technology and Innovation and Intel, in which high school students compete to make mobile applications using Gilbert’s data.
- Tempe has launched two webpages that provide residents with important information and opportunities for civic engagement. [My Tempe](#) contains links to everything from financial reports and resident demographics to employee salaries and crime statistics; [Tempe Forum](#) is an online, town hall-style place residents can read what others are saying about important topics or pose questions or information of their own. It even allows the city to engage community members on specific topics, such as neighborhood issues or the General Plan.
- Marana re-established their citizens’ forum last year, as instituted by a Town Council action. The [Marana Citizens’ Forum](#) is a collective group of community members who generously give time and knowledge to provide valuable insight into how the community should grow in the short and long-term. The group was established based upon the successful concept of Arizona Town Hall, an organization that identifies and explores solutions for issues facing our state. The Citizens’ Forum will use a similar blueprint to create future success in Marana.
- Glendale plans to establish a new Citizen’s Advisory Commission on Water and Sewer, which will make recommendations to the Mayor and Council on related policy issues. The decision to establish a permanent citizen’s commission came after the city appointed 55 members of the community to a task force to gain residents’ input and recommendations about the management, sustainability and value of water to the future of the community.
- Goodyear earlier this year was awarded the prestigious “Distinguished Budget Presentation Award” by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. The award highlights the city’s long-standing methods of fiscal responsibility and transparency, marking the 12th straight year, and 17th time overall, the Finance Department won that award that recognizes both the document’s technical accomplishments as well as informational content.

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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