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The Copper Corridor’s Small-Town Heritage

It’s fun to take a look back at historic areas of Arizona as we are doing in this edition of *Arizona City and Town* magazine. Our state has such a rich history — and relatively recent compared to many other parts of the country. Old photos give us the impression that the past occurred only in black and white. But actually, the stories, personalities and places were just as colorful then as they are now.

With today’s transportation options, communications systems and the ability to transact commerce over great distances, it is unlikely that many of our small mining towns would have developed in the same way if copper had only recently been discovered. These were some of our original boomtowns, full of life and activity and the promise of great riches.

Now the historic downtowns and old buildings that were so vital in the past have, in many cases, been abandoned and uncared for in today’s world. And only a few decades from now, it is likely that many of them will be lost to us forever, existing only in memories and in those old photos.

Arizona’s small mining towns provide a rich heritage for us today, and it is good to take some time in our fast-paced lives to revisit them and remember what life was like back then. And for the people who live and work in them today, these towns are still home, and it is important to keep them active and healthy. That is a tall order.

As challenging as it is to promote economic development in the metropolitan areas of the state, it is even more difficult to keep the economies of these small communities going strong. The loss of one store, bank or gas station can have a profound impact on the local economy and local municipal revenue.

I hope you enjoy the story of the communities in Arizona’s Copper Corridor in this edition. And I hope you will take some time to visit them, as well as other small towns in the state. It’s definitely a rewarding experience.

Ken Strobeck
Executive Director
EVERY COACH NEEDS A BACK."
Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell was elected to a two-year term as president of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns at the annual conference in August. Below is a message from President Mitchell.

President Theodore Roosevelt once said, “Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.” Any student of history knows that Teddy Roosevelt lived by those words. As a person who comes from a long line of public service, this quote is an inspiration to me. My great-grandfather, W.W. Mitchell, served as a state legislator; my father was a mayor, a state senator and a U.S. representative; and my mother was a high school teacher for nearly 35 years. The need to serve, it runs deep. And it is why I initially ran for the City Council 12 years ago — to give back.

Living in Tempe for most of my life, it is the backdrop of all of my fondest memories. It has helped shape me into the man that I’ve become. Now, as mayor and as a father, I’m inspired to work hard to help better my children’s future and the future of generations to come. My public service is one of the accomplishments in my life of which I am the most proud.

Our residents have entrusted us with the duty of fostering our communities. As elected officials, we strive to provide residents with safe and vibrant neighborhoods, economic development policies that attract development and encourage businesses to grow and thrive, provide public transit, keep the library doors open, deliver quality drinking water, and more. It’s hard work, but it allows our residents and their families to lead happy and productive lives without the worry of whether the trash is going to be picked up or if the road they are driving on is safe.

As League president, my focus is going to be protecting these services and our ability, as cities and towns, to provide them. We are going to do that by carrying forward our tradition of strong advocacy. The League of Arizona Cities and Towns is at its best when we are a strong voice, speaking in advocacy on the same issues. We could be facing some challenges over the next few years, but as a respected player with both the Legislature and the business community, we will move the cause of cities and towns forward by emphasizing the contributions we make to the state of Arizona.

Mark Mitchell
Mayor, City of Tempe
President, League of Arizona Cities and Towns
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Call it what you will, but know that “copper” will always be part of its moniker. In this small pocket of eastern Arizona communities, copper is, and always will be, king.

Intertwined with these tales of innovation are stories of reinvention. Faced with obstacles including fires, labor strikes, tense race relations, commodity change, the Great Depression, wars, floods and mine closures, these communities have known on more than one occasion the meaning of starting over.

**THE STORIED DISCOVERIES OF ARIZONA’S COPPER CORRIDOR**

The communities of the Copper Corridor are diverse in their history; some began with the simple tale of Europeans wanting to settle west, while others were born out of a desire for a railroad thoroughfare, and some were created out of sheer necessity to simply provide miners and their families with a place to sleep.

Superior was actually the first of the communities to get its start. The origins of the city’s foundation began with the settlement of the military. In November 1870, Gen. George Stoneman was serving as the commanding officer of Arizona troops during the Apache Wars. His small camp served as the first start of a real settlement in the area. Gen. Stoneman had planned on making this area his headquarters, but his project was soon abandoned when Gen. George Cook came to replace him and completely abandoned the post. Today, the only physical reminder of the area is the old Mule Trail, which can still be seen across from the gorge of Queen Creek from Highway 60.

Globe's beginnings were also founded in the Apache Wars. The Pinal Mountains were known to have mineral deposits since the time of the Spanish conquistadores; however, the Mexican prospectors who discovered these deposits were never able to establish mines due to the remoteness of the area and the hostile Apache Indians. In the mid-19th century, mountain men began exploring the region, and a very basic settlement was created. By 1870, there were nearly 20 claims staked in what would eventually become the city of Globe. In 1873, the military had succeeded in defeating the Apaches, and the miners started to move into the Pinal Mountains in large numbers.

A little further south, prospectors were also seeking out areas to begin a mining exploration. Finding the area of what is now Kearny, the men staked claims, creating both the Mineral Creek Mining and Ray Copper companies. Like many of the area’s mines at the time, these initial claims did not stay, as foreign capital from Europe and other American investment groups would eventually come to purchase their rights. It was not uncommon for a mine to know several names and owners during its lifetime.
Meanwhile, somewhere in California, a man dreamed of a new start in Arizona. Fred Winkelman, originally from Switzerland, moved to the United States at age 16 and grew up in Missouri. He married and brought his wife, children and brother to California, where his wife passed away from tuberculosis. Following her death, Fred and his brother packed up the family in 1876, and the two of them pioneered Gila County.

After this arrival in Arizona, Fred met and married his second wife in Globe. When he passed away exactly 20 years later, she received 160 acres of land. In 1904, the railroad came calling. Phoenix and the Eastern Arizona Railroad needed to build the railroad through her land and established the Winkelman Station on the heart of the ranch. This was the beginning of Winkelman.

COMING OF AGE AND CHANGING COMMODITIES

There was a time when Arizona could have been known as a state with four c’s and an s. The majority of the original mine sites were actually meant to mine silver.

In 1875, William Long and Isaac Copeland passed through Superior on their way to Globe, only to stumble across a chunk of black rock, which they immediately recognized as silver. Due to their unplanned discovery, the men built what would become the richest silver mine in Arizona history. The town’s early settlers numbered more than 2,000, and by the late 1870s, the town was becoming a destination for hundreds of miners, seeing the likes of famous faces like Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. This area, known at the time as Pinal City, saw its luck deteriorate quickly as it fell apart mere years later.

Globe was eventually established as a city in 1876, when the demand for silver was at its height. As the tale goes, a huge nugget of silver had been dug from beneath the earth. To the miners who made the discovery, the piece of silver resembled a globe, and that is how the city received its name. The city was eventually incorporated in 1907.

Miami began in a similar fashion to Globe. When silver was first discovered, hundreds made a trek to Miami to continue the search for the precious metal. At the time, silver and gold continued to be the commodity of choice.

The 1880s, however, brought a drop in the price of silver and a rise in the price of copper. The market drove the communities to re-evaluate their mines’ copper deposits, and they soon changed their commodity of choice from silver to copper.

When copper became the new king, ore was being mined from copper veins and pockets in the area surrounding Globe, but not in the Miami area. Known to be home to nonlucrative porphyry deposits, Miami struggled to find its footing in a post-silver economy. Porphyry deposits are the bodies of ore in which recoverable mineral is disseminated throughout the rock mass. Because of their lower percentage of copper content, they were not found to be profitable.
Superior jumped aboard the copper train when the Magma Copper Company took over the Silver Queen Mine and the town site was laid out as a settlement formed around the mine. For the next 90-plus years, the area continued a successful operation.

By 1910, Winkelman was also fully settled, with the town incorporating and serving as the centralized supply for farmers and ranchers who lived in the early Copper Corridor region. The town was also home to some of the area’s more affluent and worldly — the upper- and middle-management employees of mining companies in Hayden lived in the main part of town with citizens hailing from destinations as far off as Europe and China. The Winkelman Historic Bridge was also built during this time, serving as an important passage for those traveling between the towns of Superior and Mammoth.

By the end of the century, however, the country’s reserve of copper was increasing, and higher-grade ore was dwindling. The industry took new interest in the porphyry deposits, and Miami experienced the dawn of a new era.

In 1906, the Miami Copper Mining Company began working the claims in the Miami area and demand for men to work in mines increased. Most men traveled to work on foot from Globe, which was 7 miles away. There was a vast need to provide these miners with housing, shopping and places of amusement. In 1907, Miami was officially founded. It was first developed by the Miami Land and Improvement Company, which purchased a tract of land on the upper end of Miami Flats. Two days after the first train arrived on the newly constructed railroad, sale and renting of lots began. At the start of 1910, there were 800 people living in Miami, and by the end of the year, the federal census recorded a total of 1,390 residents.

During this illustrious era, Hayden was also founded. Settled in 1909 as a company town, it was meant to provide housing for workers supporting the mining and smelting operations at the Hayden Mine. The Hayden Mine was operated by the ASARCO Company, which began operations to process ore from the Ray Mine in 1912.

It continued its operations of that time until 1958, when it began receiving concentrates from other mines from the communities of Pima, Bagdad, Duval and Silver Bell, to name a few. ASARCO modernized the Hayden Smelter in 1983. ASARCO continues to operate to this day and is currently one of two smelters still operating in the United States.
As the 1920s came, so did Winkelman’s height of prosperity. The copper industry was booming. Encircled by mining land and the Gila River, the area had nowhere to grow, and it became a commonplace phrase to say “one family would need to move out before another could move in.” The main business area is said to have reached more than 1 mile long and included shops, saloons, hotels, restaurants, a bank and a newspaper.

Unfortunately for the Copper Corridor and the entire county, the Great Depression soon hit, bringing this era of prosperity to a strident conclusion.

Prior to the hit of the Depression, the community in what is now Kearny was already facing labor strikes and a fire that destroyed much of the town’s business section. While the mine’s success originally continued in spite of these struggles, the Depression caused the Hayden Mill and Smelter to shut down in 1931.

By the 1930s, Winkelman was close to becoming a ghost town. The area unincorporated, as elections ceased to be held during the Depression. To top it off, the Great Fire of 1948 almost destroyed the town, completing more than a quarter-million dollars’ worth of damage at the time.

**FINDING NEW FOOTING — REBUILDING AFTER THE GREAT DEPRESSION**

In 1949, Winkelman reincorporated and worked toward restoration. Unfortunately, the floodwaters would come once again, causing the citizens of Winkelman Flats to rebuild. In fact, floods of water and economic despair have come to the town’s door several times. But the citizens endure and rebuild each time, focusing on the future of the small town. Today, residents are building upon the history of the area and are reinventing the town as an art attraction. The town may officially be Arizona’s smallest, at fewer than 400 residents, but it is one of Arizona’s most resilient.

The Winkelman Bridge following a flood. The town would see several floods, a fire and the Great Depression in its early days, but Arizona’s smallest town would remain resilient and rebuild each time. Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, History and Archives Division, Phoenix, #97-2578

The Kennecott Copper Company purchased the Hayden mine in Winkelman as the mining industry was seeing improvement due to conflict in Europe. War in Europe was creating a desire for copper, and the mines were back in business. Kennecott later turned the Ray underground mine into an open-pit mine, creating the first open-pit mining operation in 1950.

Following the Depression, John W. Galbreath Development began purchasing mine company towns and converting them to private ownership. The town of Kearny was Galbreath’s pet project at the time. His vision was to reinvent the company town model and create a private community that was geographically close to mine operations that employees could call home. In addition to constructing Kearny, he managed the transition for Hayden to become a municipality and eventually helped Kearny to incorporate in 1959.

For Superior, mining has waxed and waned over the years. The city saw the mining industry slowly diminish in the late 1900s, and it ceased altogether by 1995. In 2013, Resolution Copper filed a Mine Plan of Operations with the U.S. Forest Service, which outlines its detailed plans to mine a deposit that lies nearly 7,000 feet deep — or five Empire State Buildings — beneath the earth’s surface.

In addition, Superior’s early pioneers had interests other than copper, and it was a side hobby that created one of the state’s top tourist destinations. William Boyce Thompson rolled into Superior in 1910 and was credited with purchasing the rights to the Silver Queen Mine and bringing it into the copper era with the Magma Copper Company. As a desert wildlife enthusiast, Thompson took to turning his purchased land near the forgotten Pinal City into a pet project — an arboretum. Initially created in 1929, it has continually improved over the years and is recognized today as one of the world’s most important arboretums. The Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park has more than 6,000 plant species from every continent, and the area attracts nearly 200 kinds of birds and other wildlife species.

**REINVENTING ONCE AGAIN — TODAY’S COPPER CORRIDOR**

The Copper Corridor shows just what Arizona was like in those days of old. In a state that prides itself on the five c’s, these six communities were truly part of the renaissance of one of these important commodities.

Although these communities have experienced both prosperity and hardship in their time, they continue to persevere and pioneer, staying true to their historic base but always evolving.

As they continue to find their place in today’s Arizona, these communities provide us a glimpse at what was and what will eventually be. A visit to the area delivers a glimpse into the window of the past to what Gen. Stoneman or Fred Winkelman might have seen in their days of discovery. But the area also provides breathtaking desert views, small-town businesses and public art that can’t be found in any other corner of this state. The communities continue to rebuild and rebrand as they have so often in their history; the Copper Corridor will be seen once again.

The communities continue to rebuild and rebrand as they have so often in their history; the Copper Corridor will be seen once again.
Nestled in the foothills of the Pinal Mountains, the city of Globe has carved out a proud history in Arizona. A powerhouse in the territorial days, Globe was instrumental in Arizona history, sending George W.P. Hunt to serve as the first governor and for several subsequent terms. We are also proud to claim Rose Mofford, Arizona’s first female governor, as one of Globe’s own. Gov. Mofford graduated from Globe High School, and on her retirement from public service, she donated her collection of wonderful memorabilia, collected over many years, to the Cobre Valley Center for the Arts and the Bullion Plaza Museum and Cultural Center.

Unlike many small cities and towns that grabbed at the chance to tear down the old and go for the newest in architecture, Globe opted instead to preserve its history, especially in the downtown area, which boasts several blocks of gorgeous territorial-era buildings. The Gila County Courthouse was rescued from certain dilapidation by a fine arts guild that has renovated the building back to its stately beginnings. The old jail is a delight to anyone who remembers the Saturday-morning Westerns. And our oldest building of all is Besh Ba Gowah Archaeological Park, which is rebuilt on an 800-year-old Salado Indian village.

Globe is at the epicenter of outdoor activities. From hiking and biking in the Pinal Mountains and walking parks within town to wonderful downtown streets to stroll, it’s easy to tell we appreciate being in the middle of Arizona’s most beautiful heartland.

History resonates in Globe. Ranching, mining and early politics shaped this city that still serves as the county seat. Where once Globe drew miners from around the world, now it attracts visitors who come to enjoy the friendly small-town atmosphere, delightful shops and restaurants, and outdoor activities. Copper is still most prized here in Globe, but we’ve found tourism offers new and exciting riches.

From left to right: Historic Gila County Court House and Jail; Upper Broad Street, photo courtesy Globe-Miami Chamber of Commerce; Besh Ba Gowah park, photo courtesy of Globe-Miami Chamber of Commerce; Globe historic district
The town of Hayden is a copper mining town located in southeast Gila and Pinal counties. Originally founded as a company town, it was shaped by patterns of immigration over many generations. It is rich in history, and the heritage bond of the community is solid. Hayden celebrated its centennial in 2009. The local Catholic church celebrated its centennial in 2013. ASARCO Copper Mine also celebrated 100 years of operation in the community. The ASARCO mine employs workers from all over the state and contributes millions of dollars to Arizona’s economy. The ASARCO mine is one of the last two smelters operating in the United States.

The town of Hayden is a warm and welcoming community that attracts individuals to partake in recreational activities. The weather in Hayden is beautiful most of the year, which is ideal for golfing on our nine-hole golf course. The tree-lined golf course sits off the banks of the Gila River. Around the golf course, you can picnic at one of the ramadas; camp at the recreational vehicle park; or, in the summer, enjoy Little League games.

The town of Hayden takes great pride in having a full, operating senior center. Our senior center provides meals for the elderly in all our local neighboring communities and activities and social events Monday through Friday. The senior center is also staffed with vehicles to assist in transporting participants from the outlying communities to our location. The town of Hayden provides support in continuing the Meals on Wheels program throughout the Copper Corridor. The town council understands the need to plan for the future and approved a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant to improve the town’s infrastructure.

The town of Hayden is resilient. Its residents continue to practice their heritage and cultural traditions, making it a true Arizona community working to stabilize itself, improve its housing stock and commercial buildings, and strive for economic growth and community development.

Kearny — named in honor of Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny and his dragoons, who camped on the Gila River on their way to California in 1846 — was officially established in 1959. When the local Kennecott Mining Company decided to change from underground to open-pit mining, the towns of Ray and Sonora had to be moved. At the same time, Kennecott was building a new smelter in Hayden, and homes were being demolished to make room for the expansion. The need for more housing to accommodate these populations marked the beginning of a new town named Kearny, over 55 years ago.

Kearny is nestled at the base of the Pinal Mountain Range. The location provides prime opportunities for some of the best outdoor recreation in Arizona. For those that enjoy driving all-terrain vehicles, the Mescal Mountains Off Highway Vehicle Recreation Area has some of Arizona’s best-developed trails. Mescal Mountains has everything from rolling hills and steep mountains to flat washes and riverbed areas. It is perfect for novices but also challenging for the experienced trailblazer. Or for those who prefer a more relaxed day, there is always golfing at the Kearny Golf Course or a picnic at Kearny Lake.

And make sure to stop by uptown’s Rail and Copper Park to see the red caboose, the mining cars and the newly restored Porter air locomotive that was used by Kennecott Copper Corporation in the original underground Ray Copper Mine to haul men, ore and supplies from 1925 to 1955.
Miami
by Ellen Kretsch

Like the fighter who keeps getting knocked down but comes back to fight again, Miami has survived for many years the fluctuations of the copper market and a world economy. But with its picturesque cottages clinging to the hillsides and its territorial-era buildings in downtown, Miami is seeing what can only be termed as a renaissance.

Antique shops and art galleries have sprung up, and if it's a thirst you're trying to quench, they now have everything from an old-fashioned soda fountain to more grown-up beverages in an Old West setting. Mexican food is a favorite, so there's never a shortage of eating places. And as for those cottages on the hillside … many have been purchased by newcomers who are enchanted by Miami's small-town charm.

The town, while facing many challenges, has a new wastewater plant designed to carry Miami through the coming decades, and the town council is committed to meeting the future needs of residents. Bullion Plaza Museum and Cultural Center, located at the west end of town in a former elementary school, is becoming well-known throughout the state as a facility for meetings and conferences. Already this year, they have hosted three major groups. As a museum, it is top-rate, with displays of memorabilia from former Gov. Rose Mofford, an extensive mineral and rock collection, and histories of the various ethnic groups that came to work the copper mines.

Miami is a proud reminder of the endurance and courage that early settlers in the mining camps demonstrated. That “we can do it” spirit survives today in Miami.

Superior
by Sue McKinney Anderson

Just one hour from Phoenix by car, but a world away in terms of beauty and quaintness, sits Superior. When the mines closed years ago, many people moved on and houses as well as businesses sat vacant and fell into disrepair. Not so today! In recent years, people, many of whom are artists and visionaries, have been renovating the structures and creating a wonderful assortment of creative and eclectic homes and businesses.

The weather is beautiful, and the views are endless. Each year, the Chamber hosts a home and building tour in January that attracts approximately 1,000 people. Art, antiques and the famous Mata Ortiz potters from Mexico are all part of the event. All go home happy and delighted they came. Other festivals, including the Apache Leap mining festival, Cinco de Mayo, the Prickly Pear Festival, Noche de Vaquero (Night of the Cowboy) and Miracle on Main Street (a Christmas parade and event) make Superior a great place to visit all year round.

Soon, your visit won’t be compete without staying at the magnificent Magma Hotel, which is listed on the National Historic Registry and will be opening shortly. Bicyclists, hikers, rock climbers, ATV lovers and equestrians have endless trails and areas to explore. Great retail shops, galleries and restaurants will fill your every need. We’re proud to staff an official Arizona Office of Tourism in Superior and welcome you to start your day at the red caboose on Highway 60 or at the Chamber of Commerce at 165 West Main Street.

And of course, no trip to this area would be complete without a visit to the beautiful Boyce Thompson Arboretum just 2 miles west of downtown Superior.

Trails galore with fabulous plants, trees, flowers and events. Tell us what you’re looking for, and we’ll help you with your plans. Visit us online at www.superiorarizonachamber.org, or better yet, in person. We hope to see you soon!
The town of Winkelman is at an elevation of 2,034 feet and is located in the southern end of Gila County, at the confluence of the San Pedro and Gila rivers. The history of Winkelman dates back to 1877 and 1878, when a large number of farmers migrated to the region. With the coming of the railroad, a post office was established in 1903 near the ranch of Peter Winkelman. Winkelman was incorporated in 1914. However, a few years later, the town disincorporated and reincorporated on June 6, 1949.

Much like other cities and towns in the corridor, most of Winkelman’s economic activity is still based on copper. The community serves primarily as a service center and residential area for families of employees associated with the mining and processing activities. The principal employer within the town is the Hayden-Winkelman Unified School District.

Arizona State highways 77 and 177 provide excellent access to different parts of the state. Both highways route through Winkelman.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe has approved a second gaming site near the Aravaipa area of Arizona. The location is approximately 7 miles southeast of Winkelman. This project will bring much-needed economic benefits to the tribe and surrounding communities, including Winkelman, by providing 400-plus permanent jobs and millions of dollars of new revenue to the region.

The scenery around Winkelman is some of the most spectacular in the state and is part of the Old West Highway route. The mountain ranges provide the backdrop for the meandering Gila River and such landmarks as the Saddleback and Mescal Mountain ranges.

At the gateway to Winkelman stands a roadside park featuring a 115-foot-long adobe wall. You can walk around it or through it or meet within it. The wall tells the history of the town by using bits of ranching and mining implements, as well as local geological samples. The Winkelman Historic Bridge was constructed in 1916 and is one of only two left in the country, and it is on the National Historic Registry.

Winkelman is also home to the Giorsetti Superior Grocery Store. The Giorsetti family has operated this store since 1911. While shopping, you can see the old architecture style and meet the two generations of family members who work there on a daily basis.

An added attraction to Winkelman is the Winkelman Flats Public Park, located adjacent to the Gila River. This park provides RV camping with all utility hookups, flushable restrooms with hot and cold showers, dry camping areas, swimming, tubing, canoeing, and fishing. This park has a playground area for children, a softball field and a rodeo arena. A basketball court, designed by the Phoenix Suns, was obtained through grant funding.

Winkelman is a beautiful area to visit if you want to retreat from the city. You can meet many friendly residents and enjoy the infinite number of stars at night.

Information provided by the Arizona Commerce Authority.
LEGISLATURE 101:
AN INTRODUCTION TO LAWMAKING
AND THE CAPITOL IN 2015

On Monday, January 12, the 2015 Legislative Session began. Bills start in either the House or the Senate, depending upon who sponsors the bill. Senate bills start with “1001,” House bills start with “2001” and are then numbered sequentially. Although there are some differences in how each chamber operates, the basic process is the same. There are six sequential steps that take place in each.

1) Bill Assignment - A bill is “first and second read” on the floor; and then assigned to a committee based on subject matter.

2) Committee - Committees are comprised of members from each party, with the majority party having the most seats. This is the only step in the entire legislative process that is truly “open to the public” for comment. Members of the committee may offer amendments to change the language of a bill. If a bill fails here, the bill is “dead,” although there are many methods available to resurrect it. If it passes, it moves on to Rules Committee.

3) Rules Committee - Every moving bill must go through Rules Committee for legal review, discussing whether the bill is constitutional, germane with existing statute and in the proper format. The committee does not give a bill a pass or fail recommendation.

4) Caucus - The members of each party meet to review bills and the “party position” is vetted. No formal action takes place.

5) Committee of the Whole (COW) - The entire chamber comes together for a floor debate. At this point committee amendments as well as floor amendments are formally offered and adopted. Discussions can be a few minutes or several hours. In COW, a voice vote is used.

6) Third Read - All changes adopted in COW are officially engrossed into the bill and prepared for a final vote. This vote is electronically tallied. Like the committee process, if a bill fails on third read it is considered “dead” with the possibility of procedural resurrection. If it passes, the bill then goes to the other chamber and the same steps are repeated.

If an identical bill passes both chambers without any amendments, it goes straight to the governor’s office. If a bill is approved in one chamber, amended in the other chamber (but that amendment is approved by the sponsoring chamber) it also advances to the governor’s office. If a bill comes out of its second chamber different than it went in (through the amendment process) it will go to a conference committee. This committee is made up of members from both chambers who will work towards a version of the bill amenable to both chambers. If a chamber rejects the committee’s recommendation, the bill is considered “dead.” If a bill is amended by a conference committee it is then final read by both chambers. If it passes final read, it is transmitted to the governor’s office.

Once a bill is in the governor’s office, he or she can sign it into law, veto the bill or allow the legislation to become enacted without his or her signature.

Bill language, hearing schedules, live feeds and status information are available at the Arizona State Legislature’s website; www.azleg.gov. During the session League staff spends countless hours at the Legislature tracking bills. We encourage our members to stay abreast of legislative issues impacting cities and towns through our weekly League Bulletin and by contacting the League at 602-258-5786 with any questions you have. Additionally, the League has a Legislative bill monitoring page available on our website that provides more detailed information about the bills League staff is actively working.
On Monday, January 12, the 2015 Legislative Session began. Bills start in either the House or the Senate, depending upon who sponsors the bill. Senate bills start with “1001,” House bills start with “2001” and are then numbered sequentially. Although there are some differences in how each chamber operates, the basic process is the same. There are six sequential steps that take place in each.

1) Bill Assignment - A bill is “first and second read” on the floor; and then assigned to a committee based on subject matter.

2) Committee - Committees are comprised of members from each party, with the majority party having the most seats. This is the only step in the entire legislative process that is truly “open to the public” for comment. Members of the committee may offer amendments to change the language of a bill. If a bill fails here, the bill is “dead,” although there are many methods available to resurrect it. If it passes, it moves on to Rules Committee.

3) Rules Committee - Every moving bill must go through Rules Committee for legal review, discussing whether the bill is constitutional, germane with existing statute and in the proper format. The committee does not give a bill a pass or fail recommendation.

4) Caucus - The members of each party meet to review bills and the “party position” is vetted. No formal action takes place.

5) Committee of the Whole (COW) - The entire chamber comes together for a floor debate. At this point committee amendments as well as floor amendments are formally offered and adopted. Discussions can be a few minutes or several hours. In COW, a voice vote is used.

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