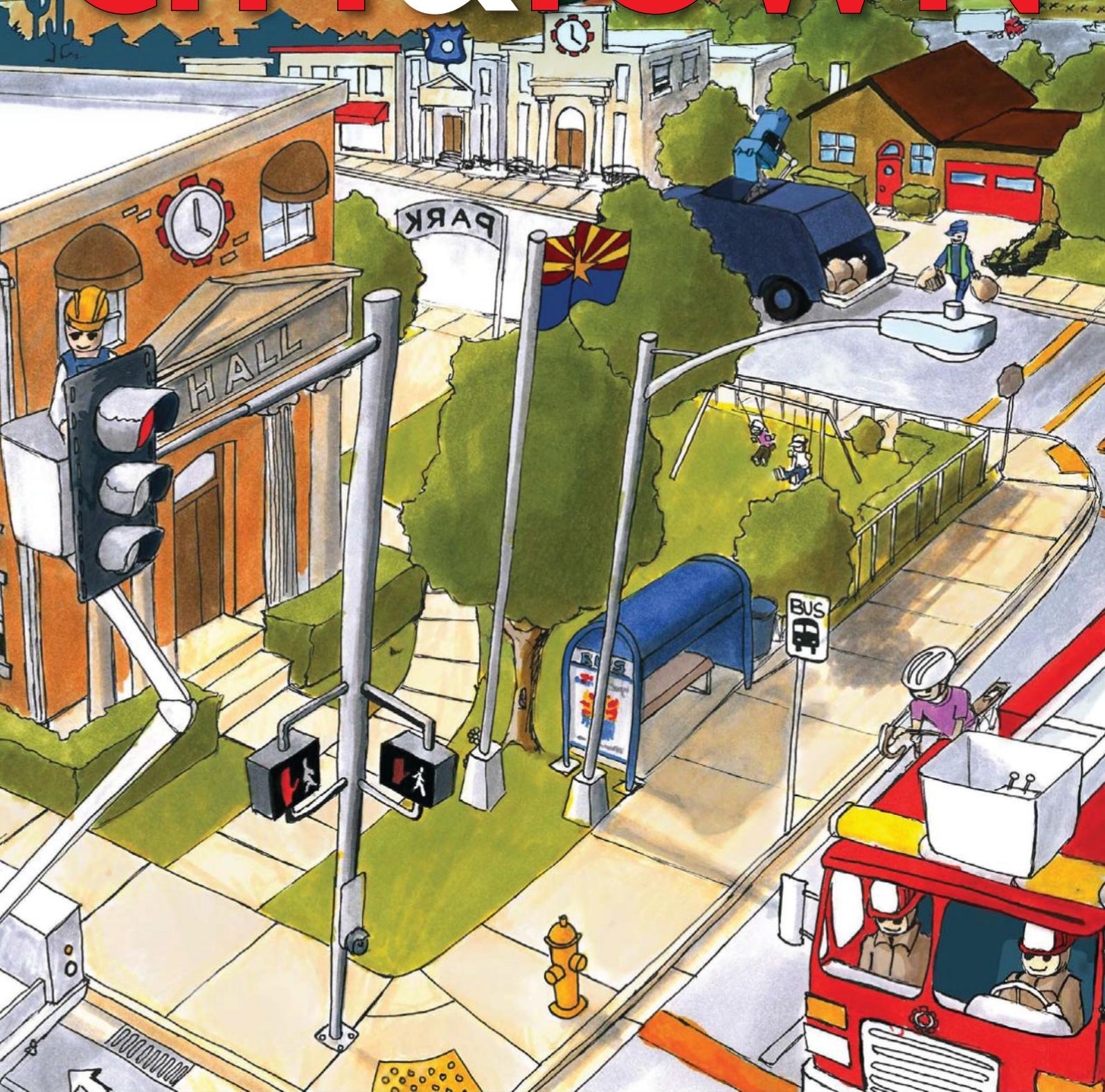


ARIZONA

A publication of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns | Winter 2016

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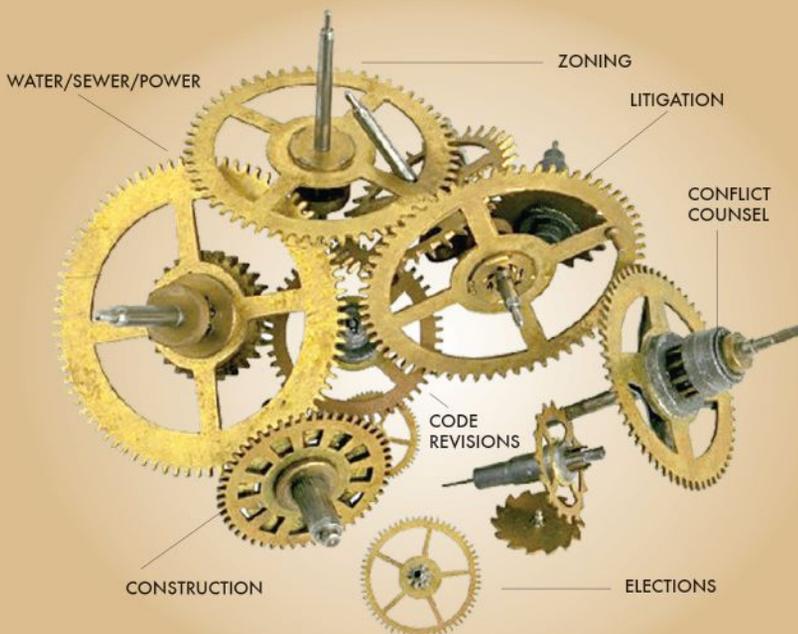
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The Spirit of Public Service

There is no single career path that leads to service in municipal government. While it is true that many of the young professionals entering government service go through the excellent programs in public administration at Arizona State University or the University of Arizona, many others never envisioned themselves as working in municipal government. Regardless of what attracted them to their current position, nearly all government employees have the same goal — to apply their expertise to the best of their ability for the benefit of the residents of their city or town.

When the League holds our programs for newly elected officials, I like to go around the room and ask those in attendance what motivated them to run for elective office. The comments I hear most frequently are that they wanted to make a difference in their community, that they saw something that needed improvement, or that they wanted to give something back. Whether elected officials or city staff members, people don't get into our profession to get rich or amass power. They are in city and town government service to make life better for their families, their neighbors and the entire community.

You can see some excellent examples of that spirit in this edition of the League magazine.

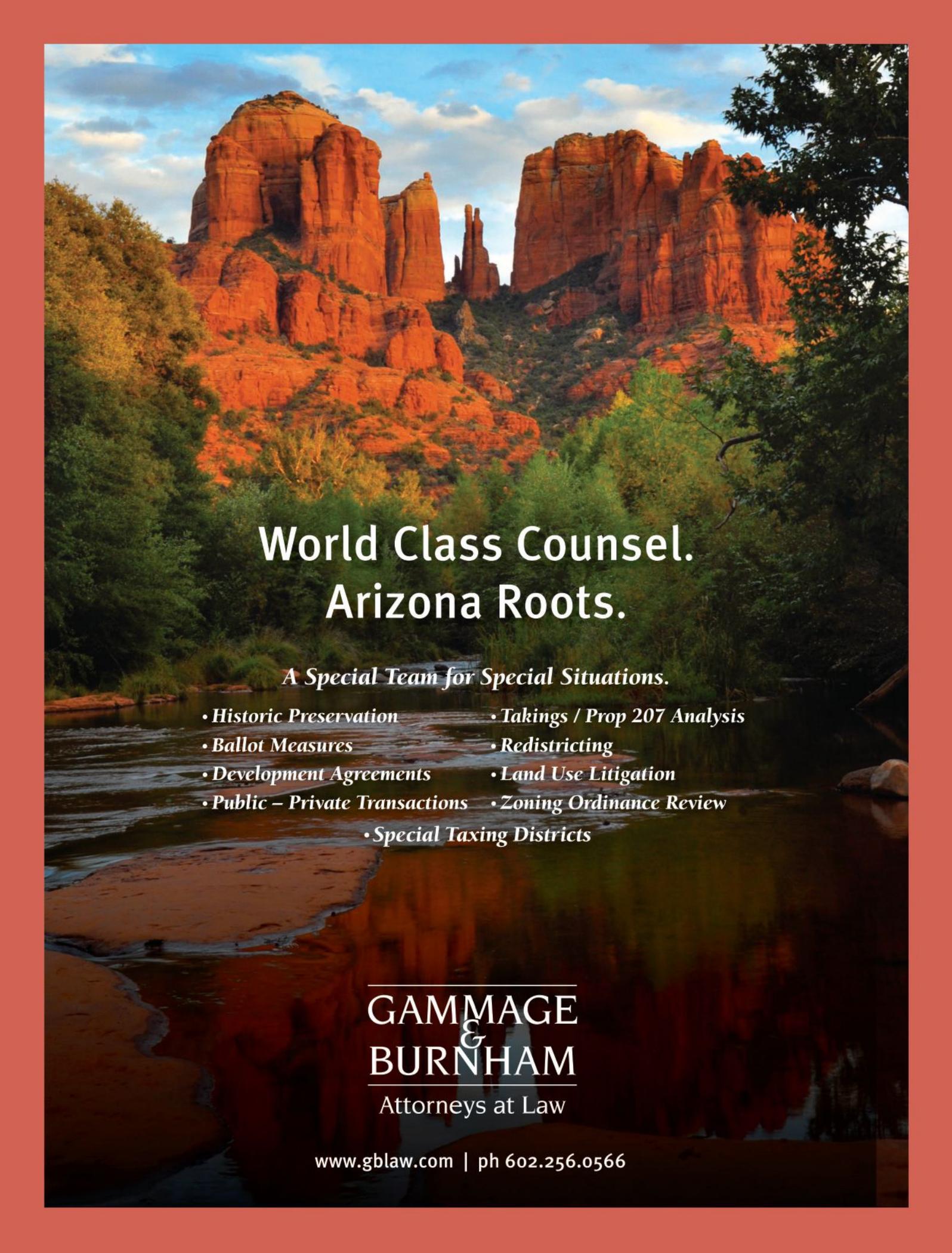
Sometimes people were raised in a home where their parents or other relatives were in public service — perhaps as a police officer, city clerk or an elected official. Chances are that the conversation around the dinner table had to do with the various issues that came up during the day and how they were worked out, so that the concept of working for the city was a natural progression.

In other settings, that may not have been the case. Each of us has a unique set of circumstances, skills, education and lucky breaks that have brought us to where we are today. What brings us together is working cooperatively to serve the citizens of our community. Citizens are the reason cities and towns exist and the reason for all of us striving for efficiency and excellence. The people are the owners of the city, and we are engaged in doing our respective jobs for the benefit of all.

It's great to be able to recognize some of the thousands of municipal officials and employees in Arizona. Each one has a story to tell and a job to do. I am grateful for the dedication of each one — regardless of his or her specific role. I hope this publication will remind you to think twice about the people doing their jobs for the city or town and to give them a smile or thumbs-up next time you have the opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Strobeck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Strobeck
Executive Director



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The Men and Women of Arizona's Cities and Towns

Like any business, organization or level of government, it takes many people to make a city or town run successfully. From large cities with several thousand employees to small towns where a handful of people take on multiple tasks, Arizona's cities and towns couldn't run without the people behind the curtain.

And it takes all kinds of people to make the show work.

There are well-known city employees like librarians, police officers, firefighters and garbage truck drivers. And there are lesser known, but equally important, positions like plans examiners, streets supervisors, intergovs and public information officers, to name just a few. All of these people, working together, are what make a city's day-to-day operations successful.

Did you know that most of Arizona's cities and towns have a city manager who serves as the chief administrator of the organization or that there are people whose job is to keep drinking water safe? There's also a person who manages elections, responds to public records requests and maintains records of city council meetings, and another who oversees the management of programs that keep children active and healthy. There are city attorneys, recreation coordinators, judges, street workers, economic development specialists, finance and accounting departments, and even gravediggers serving in cities and towns — not to mention the countless volunteers and board and commission members who serve to help better their communities! There are more positions than possible to count, but each person plays an integral role in making his or her city or town work.

Arizona is lucky to have professional, hardworking and caring individuals who keep our local governments working effectively and efficiently.

These individuals have dedicated their careers and lives to public service. They are passionate about the work they do and are adamant about providing a quality community to the residents who live in their areas.

Each person is unique, and every position is important. But it is all of these hardworking and committed individuals who ensure that we are safe, have the resources we need, and enjoy a quality of life only Arizona's cities and towns could provide.



Dr. Denise Bates Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission Member

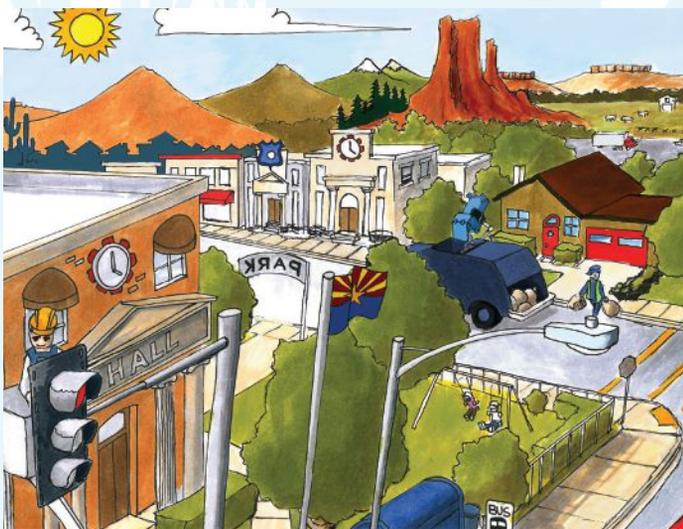
When Dr. Denise Bates moved to Goodyear from Downtown Phoenix nine years ago, she wanted to learn more about the heritage of the city she and her family moved to. Now, Bates is part of a push behind the Goodyear Mobile

Museum that is gaining momentum.

After working closely with the Three Rivers Historical Society and local historian Sally Kiko to acquire pictures for the Images of America series book about Goodyear in 2012, Bates wanted to take the city's history lesson to another level, so to speak — a visual element that would be available at city events and for organizations to see.

So what did Bates do? A professor at Arizona State University who holds a doctorate degree in history, she later became a member of the Goodyear Arts and Culture Commission and added a historical aspect to the group. Bates began putting together large vintage photographs on portable panels that told the city's history. Truly a grassroots effort, she expanded on the idea from the former history trail project that was started in partnership with the city, the Maricopa County Parks and Three Rivers Historical Society a number of years ago.

Drawing from the archives of the Three Rivers Historical Society and the collection of Goodyear resident Gloria King,



who operated the Memories museum, the Goodyear Mobile Museum, became a reality.

“We’re taking the history to the people instead of waiting for the people to come see the history,” Bates said. “It’s been an ambitious project.”

Those images can now be seen on 20 different displays, each depicting Goodyear’s beginnings through its founder — Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. Executive Paul Litchfield — the town’s history in cotton growing, and its rich history in defense and aerospace industries through Goodyear Aerospace and Lockheed Martin. Then, there’s the story of Goodyear’s rapid growth just before it became the spring training home of the Cleveland Indians and Cincinnati Reds.

“I’m a firm believer in that you must know the history of the city where you live,” Bates said.



Lee Cox
Airport Customer Service Technician,
Town of Wickenburg

Lee Cox was raised on a farm in Kentucky. At age 17, he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a parachute infantryman and served in combat deployments during Operation Just Cause and Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield.

After leaving the military, he worked in construction and as a gunsmith, later re-enlisting in the Army Reserve as an aircraft structural repairman.

He also worked as a cable splicer, apprentice electric lineman, certified backcountry guide, appliance repairman and guest ranch maintenance worker/wrangler, which is what eventually led him to Wickenburg.

Landing in the Town of Wickenburg, Cox began as a communication specialist in 2006 with the Wickenburg Police Department. He also worked as a reserve officer and, once he graduated from the police academy, was offered a position as a full-time officer. He served five years as a full-time officer, three as the department’s K-9 handler.

Unfortunately, medical issues prevented Cox from continuing his position as a full-time police officer, which led him to apply for a position as the Wickenburg airport customer service technician.

As the airport customer service technician, Cox gets to experience a variety of tasks on a daily basis. Encompassing several areas, Cox’s responsibilities include facility and equipment maintenance, fueling aircraft, answering questions and assisting visitors with their travels to Wickenburg.

He says that the best part of his job is getting to meet a diverse array of people from all over the country and world, not unlike many of the jobs he has held in the past.

It’s clear that visitors enjoy meeting Cox and learning how a small-town Kentucky boy came to live in the small-town Southwest.

“I have been asked many times how I ended up in Wickenburg, as my accent gives it away that I’m not from here. I reply that it’s a long story,” Cox said. “Although I have traveled the country and world over the years, seen and done many things, I sometimes wonder how a small-town farm boy from Kentucky found his way to a small town in the desert of Arizona. It’s been a long road that led me here, but I can say without a doubt I am proud to now call Wickenburg my home.”



Jim Dawson
Senior Plans Examiner, City
of Chandler Planning and
Development Department

None of us enjoyed getting our homework returned by the teacher tattooed with red ink, but sometimes it was warranted. This scenario is repeated numerous times in the adult world of construction plan review, and Jim Dawson is the guy wielding the red pen.

As a building plans examiner, Dawson pours over the construction plans of developers and builders to ensure they are designed in accordance with the International Building Code, fire code, mechanical code, plumbing code, energy conservation code, National Electric Code, residential code, and the accessibility design guidelines that developed out of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Builders sometimes take issue with corrections being requested, but Dawson’s grasp of the subject matter and reasoned demeanor usually wins out. And sometimes Dawson doesn’t have to say a word, like the time a design consultant was upset with several ADA requirements and insisted on meeting personally with Dawson. The consultant’s objections evaporated when Dawson rolled his wheelchair into the lobby to greet him.

Dawson has been paralyzed from the chest down and confined to a wheelchair since 2001, following a fall he took while on vacation in Canada. With his injury has come limited mobility and a greater reliance on others, especially his wife of 34 years, Tina. He credits Tina with being his lifesaver and speaks of the many sacrifices she has made to keep him going.

Before the accident, Dawson was an active outdoorsman and traveled frequently while holding numerous jobs both in the United States and Canada. He was born in Kingston, Ontario, and grew up helping his father, who was a plumbing contractor. He also worked as a carpenter and later became a building inspector and plan reviewer for an agency of the Canadian

Government similar to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Other government jobs followed, including a high-level job with Canada's Department of Indian and Northern Affairs overseeing the infrastructure, housing and social service needs of numerous Indian communities in northern Alberta, Canada. He later owned his own construction company in his hometown of Kingston.

The appeal of warmer climates led Dawson and his wife to Arizona in the mid-90s. There, he held jobs with Scottsdale and Gilbert, went into the home inspection business, and even operated a restaurant and bar in Mesa. He joined Chandler nine years ago and said he's grateful to be working alongside many wonderful co-workers.

And when asked about his life philosophy, Dawson smiled and said, "I make a conscious mental decision each day to make it the best day I can possibly make it."

That sounds like something we should all write down in big red letters.



Kim Eckhoff

Librarian, City of Tolleson Public Library

Assigned to complete a master level course assignment a few years ago, Kim Eckhoff stepped into the Tolleson Public Library to evaluate the small and rural public library from a customer's perspective and develop a plan from a librarian's perspective to make it better.

The library's centralized location inspired so many ideas in Eckhoff.

From 1997 through 2013, Eckhoff was a teacher and school librarian for the Tolleson Elementary School District. Having come to know children, parents and educators in the close-knit community very well while working as their teacher-librarian, she believed some reorganization and expanded programming would have a positive impact on the community. When the position for the city's librarian became open, Eckhoff was thrilled with the idea to apply and was given the opportunity to set in motion some of the ideas she had put into her assignment.

Libraries have always held a special place in Eckhoff's heart. As a college student, she found a part-time job working in the school library.

"To me, that was a coup, since the library has always been a special place for me. My mother was a librarian who made sure I had books in my hands every day, especially when I was a developing reader. I feel like a duck in water when I'm in a library," Eckhoff said.

Those feelings remain the same, as she still loves when she can recommend just the right book to customers and help them find another when they return raving about her first recommendation.

Literature is still igniting imagination in Eckhoff. After reading a book about a dragon last year with the library's junior

book club, she decided to build a dragon out of papier mâché for the city's Luces de Navidad Parade. It was 10 feet high and 15 feet long.

"I've had a lot of big ideas like that over the years, and fortunately, I have a husband who understands my wild ideas and helps me build them!" Eckhoff said.

As a librarian in a small community, Eckhoff has the opportunity to wear many hats. She spends a lot of time networking with other librarians in Arizona and nationally. She also runs with a lot of ideas to develop programming as well as coordinating the summer reading program, book clubs, a tutoring program and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) activities.

"Libraries transform communities, and it's really satisfying to be a part of that."

She also finds that she's witnessed some strides, both big and small, that the library staff has made this year. From kids chanting rhymes and building their appreciation for literature during story time to adults learning how to use an e-reader for the first time, Eckhoff feels proud about each accomplishment.

"Libraries transform communities, and it's really satisfying to be a part of that," she said.



Floyd A. Gilmore

**Show Low Cemetery Grave Digger,
City of Show Low**

It is difficult to imagine that anyone can be passionate about digging graves, but Floyd Gilmore has dug more than 1,000 graves in the city-owned cemetery since 1976 as an independent backhoe operator. He finds the

work fascinating and, sometimes, even exciting because he "gets to do things no one else has ever done."

"According to Arizona law, a body doesn't have to be embalmed if it is buried within 24 hours of death," Gilmore said. He recalled fielding a frantic call from a local mortician asking that a grave be dug within three hours — or miss the 24-hour window. The decedent, a white male, was buried wrapped in a handmade Indian blanket, a gift for his many years of working alongside Navajos and Apaches on their reservations.

In the same manner, Gilmore buried one of his grown sons, whose last wish was to not be embalmed. He was assisted by his other three sons and grandchildren. Gilmore said, "It's like a family tradition. My kids have always helped me dig graves."

With almost 40 years of experience, Gilmore has disinterred graves across Apache and Navajo counties. Often, the graves are on private property, and the new owners want them transplanted. One job was to disinter five graves — four children ages 4 to 11 and one uncle who died from an influenza epidemic in the

early 1900s. Similar to an archaeological dig, Gilmore and his grandchildren used whisk brooms to clear away the dirt from the remains buried in homemade pine caskets disintegrated by time and moisture. “Moisture is what causes decay,” Gilmore said.

As proof, he recalls disinterring the graves of a family buried in dry sand on a private ranch in Apache County. The earliest, the father, was buried in 1876; the mother, in 1890; and the children, in the early 1900s. The pine boxes holding the decedents were intact, and the mother was mummified, her clothes and blond hair otherwise uninterrupted by time.

Next time you visit a cemetery, check the headstones, and see what intriguing story you might uncover.



Doug Graeme Queen Mine Tour Manager, Bisbee

People find their careers and their passions through a variety of different ways. For Douglas Graeme, he was born into it.

Doug Graeme’s storied history with the city began in 1883 with the arrival of his great grandfather, who came into town looking for

work. Over the next several decades, he settled and raised a family in this town, growing a passion for its history.

Doug was born years later in Bisbee and took his cues from generations past, as he spent much of his free time exploring, collecting artifacts and learning about his city’s history.

Together, with his siblings, Richard W. Graeme IV and Emily Graeme Larkin, Doug helped write a book about Bisbee’s history. Inspired by the past of their own family members, the siblings took to paper to share tales about copper mining, natural disasters, and the people who came to settle and grow the popular southern Arizona community.

Bisbee is an old mining city in southern Arizona, rich in history and culture. Their account of the city’s past incorporates the geological significance of finding copper ores, the major influences of Native American culture, presence of early culture like opera houses, rodeos and saloons, and the tragedies that occurred during the early days of mining camp.

In addition to sharing Bisbee’s history through the written word, Doug serves as the Queen Mine Tour Operator for the City of Bisbee. Approximately 50,000 people a year visit the Queen Mining Tour to commemorate Bisbee’s prosperous mining heritage and experience what it was like working underground.



Jenny Howard Utility Director, City of Safford

The City of Safford, settled at the base of Mount Graham in rural southeastern Arizona, is a very unique municipality. Safford is the sole owner of all utilities: water, wastewater, gas and electric. Jenny Howard has been employed with the City of Safford for 11 years. In the spring of 2015, she ac-

cepted the position of utility director, managing all Safford utilities as well as wastewater treatment, landfill and solid waste services.

With a 23-year background in electric infrastructure projects in the western and central United States and 12 years in project management and controls, she feels right at home in the industry. Howard came to the City of Safford in 2004 from POWER Engineers, a world-renowned electrical engineering firm based in Idaho. She relocated temporarily to Safford from Sun Valley, Idaho, for a job assignment in construction management on a large, high-voltage transmission line and substation project for Phelps Dodge Mining (now Freeport McMoran).

During her tenure with Phelps Dodge, she met and fell in love with a cotton farmer, and they were married in 2004.

“It’s kind of funny that happened,” Howard said. “The first agricultural crop I saw when driving to Safford was a cotton field, and I laughed out loud, asking myself, ‘They grow cotton in Arizona?’”

After her contract was complete at the mine, she was hired by the City of Safford in procurement. Once on board with Safford, she continued to develop knowledge in infrastructure operations and regulations in the wastewater, water and gas industries while attending the college of business at Eastern Arizona College. In 2007, she moved to a project management position and, in 2015, became utility director. Howard loves the diversity of managing the utilities. As with all utilities, the challenges of replacing aging infrastructure, planning expansion with new development, and keeping the lights on and water flowing mean a well-managed maintenance program and a very detailed and well planned five-year capital improvement plan (CIP). That is a challenge in itself. The city water infrastructure consists of 8,000 services and 250 miles of water pipe, and serves not only the City of Safford but also the surrounding communities and unincorporated areas of Graham County. Safford also serves 4,000 electric and 3,500 gas, sewer and solid waste customers within the Safford city limits as well as owns and operates the landfill, which serves Graham County’s population of 30,000.

Along with the daily challenges of providing multiple utility services to her customers, Howard loves Safford’s diverse community and the networking associated with the director position.

“Getting involved in community outreach and working alongside such a great team of managers and employees is certainly an attribute to the overall success of the utility department. I couldn’t ask for a better team,” she said.

“The first agricultural crop I saw when driving to Safford was a cotton field, and I laughed out loud, asking myself, ‘They grow cotton in Arizona?’”



Alicia Jerger
Boating Coordinator,
City of Tempe Recreation

Born and raised in the city where she now works and still calls home, Alicia Jerger grew up in Tempe and spent her high school years playing varsity basketball.

Coming of age at a time when female athletes were finally starting to get the attention they deserved, Jerger saw firsthand how this recognition and the earlier passing of Title IX would come into play. As colleges and universities were recruiting to fill spots on sports teams, San Diego State University (SDSU) came calling. The school was adding a women’s rowing team to its collection of athletics and was recruiting female high school athletes.

Though she had never rowed before, Jerger was a respected athlete who jumped at the opportunity to move to San Diego and try out for the varsity rowing team. A year later, she was attending SDSU on a full-ride rowing scholarship. She was the very first person in Arizona ever recruited to row at the collegiate level.

Meanwhile, Jerger’s hometown was undergoing some changes of its own. Discussions about the creation of an urban lake in Tempe had been going on for years, and in 1999, during her freshman year at SDSU, Tempe Town Lake was filled.

Jerger enjoyed being out on the water, and after graduating, she was brought on as an assistant rowing coach at SDSU. She spent two years in that position before becoming the director of rowing at the Mission Bay Aquatic Center in San Diego. The center, run by the state of California, gave Jerger her first taste of working with local government.

While she had come to fall in love with the City of San Diego, Jerger returned home to attend law school. In the midst of applying, she found a job posting as an assistant boating coordinator for the City of Tempe’s Tempe Town Lake. It was the perfect position.

Continuing her passion for boating and finding a newfound passion for working in local government, Jerger went on to receive her Master of Public Administration degree. After four years working as the assistant boating coordinator, Jerger moved on to work for four years as an assistant events coordinator in the city, followed by the position of senior boating coordinator, which she has now held for two years. Jerger is the third boating coordinator the city has seen since the lake’s inception.

As the senior boating coordinator, Jerger is essentially responsible for any activity that happens “on top of the water.” She oversees the boathouse at Tempe Town Lake, which provides private storage for people to keep boats at the lake. The City of Tempe offers recreation classes on the lake, and Jerger manages rowing, kayaking and standup paddling, in addition to hosting corporate, youth and team-building events. The lake also hosts three major regattas, which Jerger oversees. She also supervises junior rowing, which brings together students from all over the Valley. They row five days a week and travel across the country to participate in competitions. Many of these junior rowers hope to find success at the collegiate level, just as Jerger did.

And like Jerger, maybe those junior rowers will find their own perfect job someday — one where they can stay on the water all day, interact with the boating community and volunteers, and serve the city that they call home.



Kara Kalkbrenner
Fire Chief,
City of Phoenix Fire Department

At 16 years old, most teenagers have three things on their minds: fun, friends and finding freedom. What they’re going to do for a living isn’t always at the top of the list. But for Kara Kalkbrenner, it was.

She was a student at Maryvale High School in the 1980s, working at Malcolm’s department store selling home furnishings. One day, Mrs. Mallow, one of her regular customers told Kalkbrenner about her son who was a Phoenix firefighter, who at that time was dating the first female firefighter to work for the City of Phoenix. She had a sense of Kalkbrenner’s kind demeanor and caring personality and suggested that she look into the fire service.

Kalkbrenner didn’t know that women were just starting to become firefighters. She had plans of following in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother who were both nurses. Her mother worked in the emergency room. Kalkbrenner knew about what doctors and nurses did for critical patients but wanted to know more about what firefighters did to help save lives before they made it to the hospital.

“I have been extremely fortunate to have served alongside some of the bravest and most interesting people on the planet. Firefighters by nature are unique. To be given the training and tools to now lead the Phoenix Fire Department is an honor and privilege.”

Within the year, Kalkbrenner volunteered to be a Phoenix fire cadet, learning the ropes at the fire stations. She finished high school, enrolled in fire science classes and eventually got her degree. By the age of 19, she graduated from an intense academy. At the time, there were only 20 female firefighters at the department, and she was one of the youngest. Fast-forward more than 30 years later. Not only are there now more than 85 female firefighters in Phoenix, but that young and eager cadet is now the first female fire chief of the sixth largest city in the nation!

“I have been extremely fortunate to have served alongside some of the bravest and most interesting people on the planet. Firefighters by nature are unique,” Kalkbrenner said. “To be given the training and tools to now lead the Phoenix Fire Department is an honor and privilege.”

She isn't the kind of chief who manages from behind closed doors. At a three-alarm hazardous-material fire this year in south Phoenix, Kalkbrenner was quickly on scene providing support with her team of command officers. Some of Kalkbrenner's most rewarding work with the department has come from riding in the backseat of a fire truck, responding to fires and helping sick people.

The chief is married to Assistant Fire Chief Kevin Kalkbrenner, who manages the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in Phoenix. He was a tremendous support, and Kalkbrenner's mother and grandmother were there as well, supporting her decision to enter a male-dominated profession.

Kalkbrenner is one of a handful of women in the nation who manages major metropolitan fire departments. After a national and competitive recruitment, she was sworn in as fire chief in late 2014. She leads a robust organization, consisting of nearly 2,000 diverse employees, that operates around the clock and manages a \$306 million budget.

Recently, Kalkbrenner ran into Mrs. Mallow and thanked her for the talk they had 30 years ago at Malcolm's. Not only did that ambitious young woman become a firefighter, but she also became fire chief.

"With the right inspiration, skills and knowledge, you can do anything," Kalkbrenner said.



Yvonne Kimball
Town Manager,
Town of Dewey-Humboldt

Born and raised in Tianjin, China, Yvonne Kimball saw firsthand what life was like without democracy, as she grew up during the latter part of Chairman Mao's dictatorship era. From an early age, she was exposed to the Mao regime's

altered version of communism.

"There was no democracy. People were — and still are — afraid of speaking the truth," Kimball said.

When Kimball was a teenager, she got her hands on a banned book of great speeches from the Western world. In it was Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. He spoke of "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

"I was stunned but deeply inspired by the concept and wanted to become a part of such a noble institution one day," Kimball said.

In 2003, she immigrated to the United States and enrolled in the University of Central Florida's Master of Public Administration

"In retrospect, I was glad that I embraced the opportunities I had and was able to make the most of them. I am making a difference every day within the community in which I work and live."

(MPA) program. Her graduate studies equipped her with skills and knowledge covering a broad range of topics and disciplines relevant to working in and managing the public sector. She knew she wanted to become a public servant.

Because of her international background, Kimball initially wanted to work in the federal government and had her sights set on the Department of State. While in graduate school, however, a few internships led her to positions within Florida county governments, and it was there that Kimball realized her enjoyment for working with people at the local government level.

"Local governments are much closer to the citizens than the federal government," Kimball said. "I knew I would have a better chance to make a difference by working for local governments."

In 2008, a few years after graduation from the MPA program, Kimball received a city manager job in Florida. As her family had always been drawn to Arizona's beauty, Kimball found a position as the town manager of Dewey-Humboldt. Since her appointment in 2011, Kimball has now served as the town's longest-tenured manager.

As one of Arizona's newest incorporated municipalities, Dewey-Humboldt appointed Kimball to continue to build the organization and establish procedures from scratch. Because of the town's youth, Kimball spends much of her time moving the town forward, overseeing the day-to-day operations and implementing the Town Council's directives.

"On top of that, just like most managers for small towns, I wear many other hats," Kimball said. "I am the town's zoning administrator, the human resources director, the chief finance officer, the public information officer and, sometimes, the receptionist!"

In her spare time, Kimball whips up home-baked goodies for her young sons. Before coming to the United States, she had never used or even seen an oven. Once she learned its capabilities, she started baking desserts almost every weekend for recreation and still takes satisfaction in her boys enjoying her concoctions.

Kimball now feels like she is finally home in Arizona. She positively touches the lives of those in her community daily and, in that aspect, finds working for a city the most rewarding job one can find.

"In retrospect, I was glad that I embraced the opportunities I had and was able to make the most of them," Kimball said. "I am making a difference every day within the community in which I work and live."



Ben La Forge
Councilmember, City of Douglas

The La Forge brothers will always remember their mom and dad's love and hard work raising five boys on a Phelps Dodge Smelter payroll in the 1940s and 1950s. While attending elementary school, poverty was prevalent, but the boys were comfortable wearing patched, hand-me-

down coveralls, and the thought of being materialistic never entered their minds. Nothing at home seemed out of place.

Later during their school years, the war efforts in Korea found Councilmember Ben La Forge's older brothers, William and Edward Jr., feeling a need to leave high school and enlist in the Army. Although the family was proud and overjoyed when brother Bill came home unharmed, they were extremely saddened when brother Edward fell as a casualty of war.

While basic needs were never lacking, the frugal ways of La Forge's mother and father enabled them to save money and further their children's educations.

Following college, he found employment with the City of Douglas and retired as public works director in 1996 after 34 years of service. During his career, La Forge served intermittently as president and member of the Douglas Unified School District Board for 14 years. Having this elected position instilled in him the desire to serve in an even greater capacity, as city councilmember.

"I turned out to be the only noneducator in the family," Councilmember La Forge said. "However, my political science major served me well."

As a retired city administrator, he could help further develop and design purposeful quality of life solutions needed within the city.

Being an open-minded individual, he realized his biggest resource would be constituents and the people in the community.

His dedication and conscientious efforts are apparent in the awards that he has received during his tenure, which he noted are "equally shared." Gov. Bruce Babbitt appointed the councilmember to the Arizona Department of Transportation Advisory Board, and the city was also bestowed with his award for energy conservation. Gov. Raúl Castro bestowed his gratitude during a tumultuous time for Councilmember La Forge's efforts in renaming the most historical park in Douglas in his honor. Gov. Janet Napolitano recognized his public service efforts and even proclaimed January 24, 2008, as Ben La Forge Day. In addition, the League of Arizona Cities and Towns presented the councilmember with a service award, a significant highlight to his career.

Councilmember La Forge said that as an elected official, he has been very fortuitous to have found common ground and support from his colleagues. In relationship with his colleagues, they renewed interest in improving city properties. A \$15 million Advanced Center of Technology, a call center, was created and now employs 350 people. On Main Street, the former Phelps Dodge Mercantile building was purchased, renovated and remodeled, and is now occupied by Cochise County serving as its local government center. Through joint efforts by the Douglas Unified School District and the City of Douglas, a modern facility, The Douglas Aquatic Center, was also realized.

Councilmember La Forge said, "Even though I find myself in a position to be term-limited by the Douglas City Charter that restricts me from holding office a third time, I will not find myself deterred from continuing to serve the fine City of Douglas that I'm so proud of."



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Nicole Laurin-Walker Judge, Town of Gilbert

Gilbert Judge Nicole Laurin-Walker is a legal rock star.

Growing up just outside of Chicago, Nicole Laurin-Walker was a serious student of classical piano and competed regionally. Her studious manner led her to attend the University of Michigan, where she received a degree in psychology, and later to the University of Arizona College of Law, where she received her law degree. It was there in Tucson that she received her first taste of courtroom experience as an oral argument contest winner at the law school. She also spent time working as a Haitian asylum petition writer during a summer in Miami, a legal intern for Motorola in Phoenix, and an intern at the Pima County Public Defender's Office. After law school, she worked as a bailiff at the Maricopa County Superior Court while she studied for the bar exam.

Her extreme focus led Laurin-Walker to become the Town of Gilbert's first assistant town prosecutor in 1994. Back then, there was only one prosecutor in the office, and she appeared before one judge. Her hiring at the time doubled the size of the prosecutor's office!

As a prosecutor, she was in the Gilbert Municipal Court every day, appearing before Gilbert's sole judge, David Phares, and handling everything from probation violations to jury trials. After a time, she moved over to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office and prosecuted felons before returning to Gilbert to write appeals for the Prosecutor's Office. After her return, Judge Phares decided it was time to add a second judge to the court, and Laurin-Walker applied, despite being only 27 at the time. She was offered the job and has held the position ever since.

When a person is accused of committing a misdemeanor in the Town of Gilbert, Judge Laurin-Walker begins her duties. When the individual first appears in court, Laurin-Walker's job is to make sure he or she understands the charges being faced and the rights he or she has, appoint an attorney if the accused person is eligible, listen to the victim's concerns, and then set some release conditions to make sure the accused person will appear at future court dates. If a person pleads not guilty, Laurin-Walker will set the case for trial, making decisions before the trial about what evidence should be allowed and what should be kept out. During an actual trial, she questions jurors to make sure they are fair and impartial, decides which rules of law the jurors will be required to follow, and makes sure proper procedures are followed by the parties so that the process is

fair to both sides. If there is no jury, Judge Laurin-Walker has the authority to decide if the accused is guilty or not guilty and also to give a sentencing, should the case require it.

Gilbert Judge Nicole Laurin-Walker is also a real rock star.

True to her musical roots as a classically trained pianist, Laurin-Walker continued to be a musician alongside all her schoolwork and lawyering. She now sings and plays keyboard in a rock band called The Love Me Nots. The band tours worldwide and has put out six albums. Laurin-Walker said she has gotten a taste of real rock star success, despite the restrictions she had due to her work with the town. Her colleagues all support her musical endeavors and strive to maintain their own hidden talents outside of work.

“I love working in a place where everyone seems to be doing something fascinating outside of work hours,” Laurin-Walker said. “It gives us a better perspective overall.”



Rosie Lopez
Solid Waste Equipment Operator,
City of Peoria

“Anything is possible. You just have to want it and believe in yourself.”

These are the words that Rosie Lopez lives by as she serves the City of Peoria.

Born in Tempe and raised in southern Phoenix, Arizona, Lopez is a hometown girl whose dedication to her city has led to great accomplishments.

Lopez works for the City of Peoria as a solid waste equipment operator. In fact, she’s the only female solid waste equipment operator to work for the city. And she’s the best.

Recently, Lopez competed in the Road-E-O, an annual event sponsored by the Solid Waste Association of North America.

“Anything is possible. You just have to want it and believe in yourself.”

Her incomparable skills and belief in herself led Lopez to compete with the best of Arizona, and she placed first in the rear-loading category at the national event. Weeks later, Lopez placed first in the same category for the international competition. The competition included participants from Arizona and the rest of the United States representing municipal and private waste haulers, landfill equipment operators and mechanics. The Road-E-O promotes professionalism and safety in the field of solid waste management and facilitates a spirit of competition and goodwill.

In a typical day, Lopez does a little of everything and is happy to assist wherever she is needed. Currently, she is working in residential areas as side-rail and does front-loading for commercial areas. She also operates a Kubota articulating loader, which collects uncontained loose trash.

“I am the best Kubota operator here,” Lopez said confidently. And she has the skills — and title of number one — to prove it.



A.C. Marriotti
Finance Director, Town of Sahuarita

Born in Tacoma, Washington, and having grown up in a military family, A.C. Marriotti settled in Tucson where he attended Palo Verde High School and the University of Arizona, earning bachelor’s degrees in accounting and finance. Marriotti has served as the Town of Sahuarita’s finance director for nearly 12 years. He was recently awarded the town’s first Manager’s Choice Award in 2015. His finance department has received national recognition for excellence in financial reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association many times throughout the years for the town’s budget publications and comprehensive annual financial reports.

In addition to the normal duties expected of any financial officer, Marriotti oversees the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee as well as the town’s information technology department. “I really enjoy the variety in my job and learning new things,” Marriotti said.

Known as a team player by his workmates and colleagues, he’s always willing to take on new challenges. Just this year, Marriotti’s department took over wastewater utility billing services for the town. This role was taken on suddenly when the private company responsible for billing discontinued its service. Under Marriotti’s leadership, billing cycles were brought up to speed, and services were streamlined, including better online payment options, real-time tracking and additional staffing to allow for better customer service. Marriotti has also served on the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee and actively volunteers in his community.

Marriotti’s strength of character shines through in his personal life. He and his wife are licensed foster care providers and advocates for children in need of homes, families and positive learning environments. “There are a variety of ways that we can help kids in need of foster care, and anyone can participate,” Marriotti said. “Donations to foster care agencies help tremendously, and the need in Arizona is great.”



Carmen Martinez
City Clerk, City of Avondale

The city clerk is one of the essential positions in municipal government. Depending on the size of the city or town, the city/town clerk’s responsibilities are varied, and the clerk often performs functions of city manager, finance officer and human resource director. In the City of Avondale, the city clerk’s functions include records management, elections, council meeting agenda and minute preparation, public records requests, liquor licensing, annexations and special event permits.

Carmen Martinez was hired as deputy city clerk in 2002 and promoted to city clerk in 2008. She has advanced the functions

“We want to become the go-to place where any voter in Maricopa County can cast their vote. Our staff is knowledgeable, professional and friendly. Carmen Electa is preparing for the city’s upcoming 2016 primary election. We will do our best to reach out to voters and educate them and entice them to cast their ballot.”

and services in the city clerk department in so many ways. Her staff is literally the face of Avondale — as they manage and staff the front desk in the lobby of City Hall, greeting thousands of people who come through the door each year, answering the telephone to the main City Hall line and more. In 2007, she brought forth the idea of providing passport processing services at City Hall. Since then, the program has generated more than \$1.15 million in revenue to the city.

Thanks to Martinez’s efforts, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has hosted several citizenship ceremonies at Avondale City Hall. The ceremonies, consisting of more than 100 new citizens each, are always very moving. Martinez herself has been a keynote speaker at these events, telling her personal story of becoming a naturalized citizen.

When it comes to elections, Martinez has placed a great deal of focus on transparency and voter participation. In 2008, the city faced a substantial increase in its election costs. In an effort to be accountable to the citizens with their money, the city council approved the staff’s recommendation to change the city’s election cycle ahead of the statutory requirement. This required voter approval. Martinez recognized this change represented a challenge with respect to independent voters and the need to educate them regarding their choice for a ballot. Working with the community relations department, she conceived the idea of Carmen Electa, Avondale’s own elections ambassador. Carmen Electa is the face of elections in Avondale, and she comes out every election to educate voters and their families about voter registration deadlines, issues and choices. Avondale’s special election was put in the 2008 primary election ballot for voters’ approval. Avondale chose to host an early voting site for that election and, on the last week of the early voting period, saw hundreds of voters each day come into Avondale City Hall to cast their early ballot.

The 2014 primary election was a particularly challenging election in Maricopa County. There was confusion with polling places. Some cities were holding all-mail ballot elections while others weren’t. As part of a resident outreach, the city clerk’s department learned that voters would be more likely to vote if voting was more accessible and convenient for them.

In response to that, Avondale now offers its City Hall as an early voting site for voters for every election regardless of whether Avondale had an issue on the ballot. Since ballots are printed on

demand, ANY voter in Maricopa County can come to Avondale City Hall to cast his or her ballot. Beginning with the 2015 November election, Avondale has hosted an early voting site for every election.

“We want to become the go-to place where any voter in Maricopa County can cast their vote,” Martinez said. “Our staff is knowledgeable, professional and friendly. Carmen Electa is preparing for the city’s upcoming 2016 primary election. We will do our best to reach out to voters and educate them and entice them to cast their ballot.”



Steve Moore
City Attorney, City of Yuma

Steve Moore grew up in Hayden, Arizona. After graduating from the University of Arizona College of Law, he hitchhiked around the world for almost three years. During that time, he visited 36 countries and had various jobs, including working in three Olympics, a movie in

Holland (*A Bridge Too Far*) and a brewery in western Australia.

He served as the assistant city attorney in the City of Yuma for about two and a half years before going into private practice. He then became the city attorney in 1986 and has been the city attorney for the City of Yuma for 29 years. Moore’s responsibilities include both civil and criminal at the prosecutor’s office. In Yuma, the risk management department is also part of his responsibilities. During Moore’s tenure, he’s worked for eight mayors and eight city administrators (including interims). The City of Yuma has grown from approximately 60,000 people to almost 100,000 people while he’s been in office.

Moore said he has been fortunate to have been elected to the Yuma County Bar Association twice, as president of the Arizona City Attorney’s Association and president of the International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA), which is comprised of the city attorneys of the United States and Canada. He was also only the second president of IMLA from the state of Arizona and the first in 30 years.

In general, city attorneys have a position similar to a corporation counsel for a large corporation. In Arizona, a municipal corporation handles contracts, claims, demands, lawsuits, legal advice, human resources issues, personnel issues, bond financing issues, purchasing regulations, etc. The only difference is particular types of municipal corporations have public safety personnel and issues that are usually not present in other large corporations.

One of Moore’s proudest accomplishments in this position is being part of a small group of individuals that was responsible for increasing the net water resources available to the City of Yuma from the Colorado River by approximately 80 percent. He thinks all city attorneys are rewarded in practicing through the diversity of issues in their jobs.

“About the time I think I’ve seen it all, something unique comes through the door,” Moore said. “When I took the city attorney’s job,

I said I would quit if it got boring. Twenty-nine years later, it's still not boring.”



Asia Philbin
Water Resource Coordinator,
Town of Marana

No matter who we are, what continent we live on or our circumstances, the need for water is one common thread we all share.

Perhaps that's why Asia Philbin was drawn to the field of water.

Having been the child of a father in the Navy, Philbin was born in Naples, Italy, and traveled Italy, Spain, France and the United Kingdom with her parents as an infant. While her early years aren't ingrained in memory, Philbin certainly believes her early-aged treks led to a love of travel she still carries with her.

Following her beginnings in Europe, Philbin grew up in northeastern and central Pennsylvania in Scranton and State College. Both of her parents also grew up in Scranton. She went on to attend the University of Miami, Coral Gables in Florida to earn a bachelor's degree in science, marine science and geology.

For more than a decade, Philbin worked with the City of Tucson as a hydrologist. Most recently, she joined the team at the Town of Marana, where she works as the water resource coordinator. In her capacity, she deals with water resources, water and wastewater system assets, and energy management. She is also coordinating the design and construction of a facility to recharge the treated effluent from the wastewater treatment plant. The project is helping provide water resources for the growth planned by the town. She believes it is a great opportunity to create a multibenefit project that incorporates public amenities and natural enhancements for wildlife.

She also believes in bringing water to people throughout the world.

While in graduate school at the University of Arizona, she heard a presentation from the Water for People Committee of Arizona. At the time, she learned, 2 billion people lacked access to safe drinking water. Philbin was inspired to join the volunteer group.

When she began working with the City of Tucson, Philbin soon learned that her director and many co-workers also volunteered with Water for People. As public servants whose roles involved bringing safe water, sanitation and human health to their communities, they viewed working with the organization as a natural extension of their day job.

At Tucson Water, she helped form a subcommittee that would focus on events to connect people in the water industry while raising much-needed funding for projects. Events now include two golf tournaments, the Run for World Water (Phoenix-area), Team Pedal With Purpose at El Tour de Tucson and a newly added wine tasting.

Because of help from individuals like Philbin, over the past decade, Water for People has helped reduce the number of people without access to safe drinking water. The number is still a staggering 1.8 billion people, and the organization is committed to helping 4 million more gain access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

Working with the Town of Marana for the last 18 months, Philbin has come to enjoy the positive work environment the town provides, the co-workers and the multibenefit projects.

“It's important to me to enjoy working with people I see every day and also to be supporting a larger vision for the town and the community,” Philbin said.

She certainly has a large vision for the world's community and is making a lasting impact by helping bring water to the citizens of Marana, Arizona, and people around the world.



Martin Porchas
Mayor, City of Somerton

As the second youngest of 11 siblings, Porchas grew up in the City of Somerton, where he now serves as mayor. He attended O.L. Carlisle Elementary School, Kofa High School and AWD Community College. His parents and older brothers and sisters were field laborers.

“I am very proud to say that I was not the first one in my family to attend college or finish high school,” Mayor Porchas said. “I have a brother who graduated from University of Arizona with a bachelor's degree. My second youngest sister became a nurse, and the youngest received her master's degree in education.”

Throughout the first 20 years of Mayor Porchas' life, his family would travel to California in the summers. Some years, he would not get to finish school or the season playing baseball because of the move to California.

“I am proud and now honored to say that I got to hang out and learn from one of the hardest workers I have ever known in my life — my dad.”

“Many of my friends thought that it was awesome to travel to California,” Mayor Porchas declared. “Little did they know, I was not too thrilled about it, but I had to follow my parents. Don't get me wrong, but when a boy at the age of 12 has to get up at 4:30 or 5 a.m. all summer long to go work in the fields, it makes for a long and not-too-pleasant summer.”

As he got older, Mayor Porchas came to understand why his family would travel to California. He said that Somerton still faces some of the same challenges it had 30 or 40 years ago, one of which is having the highest unemployment rate in the state. The majority of the jobs are seasonal, which is why his family would travel out of state to seek employment.

“I am proud and now honored to say that I got to hang out and learn from one of the hardest workers I have ever known in my life — my dad,” Mayor Porchas said.

Family is now just as important to Mayor Porchas, who is married to his lovely wife, Dalila, and is a proud father of two children, Martin Adrian Porchas and Andrea Porchas.

Mayor Porchas started serving his community by coaching, then serving on boards of the various sports programs. Following, he served as a commissioner for planning and zoning before being elected to Somerton City Council. He is currently serving in his second term as mayor.

“During my time as an elected official for Somerton, I have had the great pleasure to serve with other councilmembers that have worked with staff in the spirit of a team. This team, I believe, has been able to provide more and improved services to our residents,” he said.

One of Mayor Porchas’ goals during his tenure was to create more year-round jobs. In 2015, the city was able to assist with the creation of 100 new, full-time jobs for Somerton.

“One of the things I like best about serving is being able to help when the need arises,” Porchas said. “I am very proud to call Somerton home, and I invite everyone to come visit us.”



Marnie Schubert

Director of Communications, Marketing and Recreation, Town of Queen Creek

Marnie Schubert has worked for the Town of Queen Creek for eight years, starting as communications manager and changing roles several times throughout the years. She currently serves as the director of communications,

marketing and recreation. Her degree is in radio-television communications from the University of Central Florida.

Schubert came to Queen Creek from the community of Celebration, Florida, “the town that Disney built,” where she created the communications department. Her duties there included overseeing the community website, which included a resident forum section — an early predecessor to social media.

“The strategy that works today likely won’t work this time next year. This is a great time to work in government communications because social media has leveled the playing field. Small communities can be just as visible — and have a voice arguably just as strong — as big cities, thanks to Facebook, Instagram and other digital platforms. It’s all about engagement.”

Her experiences in Celebration have served her well, especially since communication resources shifted dramatically during the Great Recession. Gone are the days of printed newsletters, direct mail and reporters assigned to cover specific cities. She said that while she learned a lot during that era, she continues to find excitement in digital news, tweeting with reporters who cover a variety of communities and interacting 24/7 with residents on social media.

“Communications is an industry that is always in motion, which is why it appeals to me,” Schubert said. “The strategy that works today likely won’t work this time next year. This is a great time to work in government communications because social media has leveled the playing field. Small communities can be just as visible — and have a voice arguably just as strong — as big cities, thanks to Facebook, Instagram and other digital platforms. It’s all about engagement.”

Having grown up as a military brat (Go, Navy!), Schubert had the advantage of moving every year or so and getting to know people all over the world. You quickly learn how to make friends and recognize consistencies in human nature while learning to appreciate the fun quirks that make us all unique. She said that likely channeled her toward the communications industry — growing up around a diverse range of people in many different types of communities, mainly working toward the same positive goals.



Mike Stress

**Streets Supervisor,
City of Flagstaff Public Works**

When you think about some of the toughest jobs in Arizona’s cities and towns, snow plow driver probably isn’t the first image conjured up within the sunny state. But Mike Stress and other members of the Flagstaff streets team understand

that snow has a real presence in our state, and it’s up to them to keep the streets free and clear so that residents can get home safely.

A hometown boy, Stress was born and raised in Flagstaff and attended Coconino High School, where he showed his strengths on the baseball field. Right out of high school, he had the opportunity to try out with the Milwaukee Brewers baseball team.

He started with the City of Flagstaff in 1990 as a temporary employee in the parks department, where he cleaned sidewalks at night and worked on the softball fields during the day. As he worked his way through the city, Stress has spent time in several departments, including a year in the city cemetery.

Once he transferred into the street operations as a heavy equipment operator, Stress found where he belonged. He worked his way through the ranks before being promoted to supervisor in 2008.

Stress is responsible for scheduling the work of the Flagstaff streets crew on a daily basis. He also trains employees on various pieces of equipment and is involved with the fleet shop, communicating with mechanics to ensure equipment is ready and working properly when needed.

Stress’ job really gets interesting when the snow falls. A snow day for the Flagstaff streets crew includes the deployment of 32 pieces of equipment on a big storm. During an event, the crews communicate between two shifts to ensure that all main and critical routes are being attended to as well as manage all citizen complaints and any issues that may pop up.

Stress recalled a particular incident in 2010 when Flagstaff received five feet of snow in a 48-hour period. “The snow was so

heavy that the streets crew could not keep up with the snowfall amounts,” he said.

Stress was tasked with looking for outside help from private contractors to help plow the routes so the public could get out. They had to help haul off the snow from the downtown area as well as all the cul-de-sacs around the Flagstaff area.

In his 25 years with the City of Flagstaff, Stress has shown his capabilities as a streets supervisor. In 2012, he was selected to be a member of the Arizona state incident management team as equipment inspector.

In rain, sleet, snow, hail or sunshine, Stress and the Flagstaff streets team are working to ensure the roadways are safe for travelers.

While Stress enjoys the ability to start a project and oversee it to the end, he truly loves his job because of his capability to contribute to his hometown community of Flagstaff.



Robert Tyler
Mayor, City of Holbrook

Mayor Robert “Bobby” E. Tyler served for four years on the Holbrook City Council beginning in May 2011 when he was sworn in as the newest elected member. He was sworn into his current position as mayor on May 26, 2015.

He has been a part of, and served the community with, the Holbrook Volunteer Fire Department and the Holbrook Police Program, and has a long history of involvement with the youth of Holbrook, primarily through sports programs that include city and school leagues.

Mayor Tyler was the third of six children born to Don and Johnnie Tyler. He is a third-generation Holbrook native who graduated from Holbrook High School in 1977. He drove trucks for the City Street Department and then had a long career with Arizona Public Service Company at Cholla Power Plant and later worked for Tucson Electric Power in Springerville.

He is a proud father and grandfather who encourages his children with the words his parents instilled in him: “With hard work and the right attitude, you can accomplish your goals.”



Pam Weir
Management Analyst, City of Sierra Vista

Local governments are home to hardworking employees who care passionately about the field in which they work. They inspire individuals to continue on a path of public service.

Pam Weir is one of those individuals for whom a passion for service has been an inspiration from a young age and continues to propel her in a public management career.

Having grown up in Scottsdale, Weir developed a passion for public service while attending Chaparral High School. She dreamt of working in government as a way to use privilege to make communities more inclusive and supportive.

Recognizing her dream, she traveled east to Northampton, Massachusetts, to earn a bachelor’s degree in government from Smith College. To continue her education in public management and escape the snow, Weir moved back to Arizona to receive her Master of Public Administration degree from Arizona State University, where she was one of a prestigious few to become a Marvin Andrews Fellow.

Weir once again traded in a life of sunshine for a life of snow when she took a one-year management internship position in Fort Collins, Colorado. The position was a perfect introduction to full-time local government management work, and she loved working for such an innovative community.

But as home often does, Arizona called Weir back, and she returned to the Grand Canyon State to work for the City of Sierra Vista.

Weir’s main role at Sierra Vista is to serve as the city’s budget officer. She manages the process by which all the department directors and city leaders work together to create a balanced proposed budget. Throughout the year, she works with city departments to analyze revenue and spending projections, develop priorities for future budget years, present process updates to the city council, and create the budget book document that is shared with the community once it has been passed. Like many individuals in small-town professional management, Weir wears many hats, as she also works on special projects ranging from community engagement to performance measurement initiatives.

And like many small-town professional managers, Weir realizes the importance of local government. Having wanted to work in public service since high school, her original aspirations led her to the federal level of government. However, after working in Washington, D.C., during college as both a congressional intern and a policy advocate for a nonprofit agency, she felt that progress was very slow and often frustrating.

“I wanted to have a more direct impact on quality of life and issues of community safety and equity,” Weir said. “Local government management is the perfect place for me to use my skills and bring about tangible change to improve lives.”

Weir also loves the variety of the position; in just one day, she might work with public works, the library and finance. City management requires constant learning and creating new ways of doing things. Cities and towns are also collaborating with one another to share best practices and tackle complex challenges with municipalities from across the country.

“I believe that as communities we can accomplish more together than separately, and the role of the city manager is to lead many different people and interests together toward the common goal of prosperity,” Weir said.

As she continues to live out her passion and make her mark in the field of local government management, Weir will strive to ensure she’s using her skills to make a difference every day.



Joshua Wolfgramm
Heavy Equipment Operator II,
City of Mesa Transportation Department

Josh Wolfgramm has worked for the City of Mesa Transportation Department for 11 years. He started as a street maintenance worker and has worked himself up to heavy equipment operator on the slurry crew. A slurry seal is a

process where a mat of asphalt emulsion, water and aggregate is applied to the street to create a new surface. A slurry seal is used to extend the life of the existing pavement when it starts to show signs of deterioration. On the slurry crew, Wolfgramm operates a heavy piece of equipment called a sand conveyor but is nicknamed a “salad shooter.” Wolfgramm also gets called on to help with many other different tasks, like cleaning up trees after a storm. His supervisor describes Wolfgramm as clever, helpful and eager — a perfect combination of traits for being on a transportation field crew and getting called on to do many things!

Wolfgramm is unique in that he works with and operates heavy equipment during the day, but away from work he is a Polynesian dancer. Yes, a dancer! He performs every weekend with a group called the Royal Islanders for special events all around the Valley. The dance that Wolfgramm performs is part of the grand finale and is called the Samoan fire knife dance. During this dance, he twirls a heavy baton-like knife that is on fire on both ends. Wolfgramm learned Polynesian dance as a young boy growing up in New Zealand.

Wolfgramm moved to the United States 15 years ago after he saw a stunningly beautiful woman performing a Polynesian dance while he was visiting. It was love at first sight, and Wolfgramm moved to the United States to marry the beautiful dancer whose name is Sadie. Together Wolfgramm and his wife have four sons who range in age from 5 to 12. The boys are following in their parents’ footsteps and perform Polynesian dance too.

Aside from working full-time, dancing on the weekends and attending his sons’ sporting events, Wolfgramm is taking college courses. Somehow he finds time to do it all!



Ted Yocum
Volunteer, City of Maricopa

Ted Yocum is a resident committed to community involvement and has been passionately involved with the City of Maricopa since 2009 when he attended the Maricopa Citizen Leadership Academy. “I knew I wanted to make a difference in Maricopa,” Yocum said.

And make a difference he did! Since 2009, Yocum has volunteered with the police department, chaired the Board of Adjustment, participated in the development of the 2040 Vision Plan and general plan update, and served on the Zoning Code Rewrite Task Force, and he currently serves as the vice chairman

of the city’s planning and zoning commission and is a member of the Maricopa Advocate Program.

“From the moment I ventured into Maricopa to look for a home, the friendliness, warmth and small-town feel enveloped my wife and me. I knew it was the place I wanted to retire to get away from the East Coast hustle and hassle. But for me, personally, most of all, Maricopa, this blank-slate new city, has given me the opportunity to make a difference — to apply my experience, professional skills and energy to contribute to the success, growth and long-term vision for our fantastic new city.”

Yocum describes his participation in the Maricopa Zoning Code Rewrite Task Force as the biggest and most impactful project he has worked on with the city. Maricopa was incorporated in 2003, when the city was experiencing rapid growth. At the time, the decision was made to stay with the Pinal County Zoning Code, but eventually the

“I hope my Maricopa legacy will be that I have used my professional knowledge, skills and love of the city to enhance the quality of life for future generations.”

city needed its own code to keep up with its unique needs. In 2012, city council engaged a consultant to work with a citizens’ task force to rewrite the entire zoning code. Yocum served on that task force, which worked through monthly meetings and many hours of study, investigation and discussion over an 18-month period. The new code, more than 400 pages long, was adopted by city council on November 5, 2014, and most recently was recognized by the Arizona Chapter of the American Planning Association as an outstanding zoning code.

Yocum grew up in Pennsylvania, attended Drexel University and Albright College. He is retired from insurance management and moved from New Jersey to Maricopa in 2006. He is also the vice president of the Desert Cedars Homeowners Association Board. When he is not championing the City of Maricopa, he enjoys bowling, pinochle, the beautiful weather and Maricopa’s friendly people.

“I hope my Maricopa legacy will be that I have used my professional knowledge, skills and love of the city to enhance the quality of life for future generations,” Yocum said.



Alison Zelms
Deputy City Manager, City of Prescott

Many city or town employees have positions that require them to wear many hats in their day-to-day responsibilities. For some, the idea of taking on multiple projects and job titles could seem overwhelming. But Prescott Deputy City Manager Alison Zelms knows a thing or two about variety

and tackles multiple projects like a pro.

Having grown up on Air Force bases around the world as a child, Zelms had the opportunity to move to different places, see the world and gain perspective. She spent time in West Germany and saw firsthand the vast differences in lifestyle from each side of the Berlin Wall. It was her experience witnessing West and East Berlin that inspired her interest in the importance and daily impact of public policy.

Taking these early-learned passions, Zelms went on to receive her bachelor's degree and master's degree in Public Administration. During graduate school at the University of Arkansas, she began her work in local government, starting at the state's Bureau of Labor Market Information. From there, she became an assistant to the city manager in University Park, Texas, followed by a position in Evanston, Illinois, as management analyst in charge of a \$175 million operating budget.

Zelms was brought to Arizona through an assistant city manager position with the City of Sedona. It was there that she honed her skills in multitasking as she oversaw the finance, economic planning, information technology, arts and culture,

“This position is never boring There are always opportunities for even small gains to be made in gaining an audience for an issue or creating solutions.”

communications, and public works departments. She also started the City of Sedona's first intergovernmental relations program, serving as its legislative liaison in addition to her regular duties.

In December, Zelms celebrated four years of service with the City of Prescott. Drawing on her experience in legislative work from Scottsdale, one of her many hats in Prescott also includes serving as the city's intergovernmental affairs liaison. Within this role, she monitors legislation, develops the city's annual legislative policy with the city council and communicates the city's positions during the legislative session. Multitasking is essential for Zelms and any part-time intergov, whose full-time positions only offer them minimal time to work on legislative issues, as she is also responsible for oversight of seven operational areas and is engaged in budget development, personnel management, policy implementation and day-to-day operations.

Zelms thrives in the variety of her multifaceted position. Though it can be a challenge to cover so much ground, she appreciates the combination of broad supervisory duties and leadership on complex policy issues, in addition to continuous education on new issues and making new connections between people and topics.

“This position is never boring,” Zelms said. “There are always opportunities for even small gains to be made in gaining an audience for an issue or creating solutions.” ■

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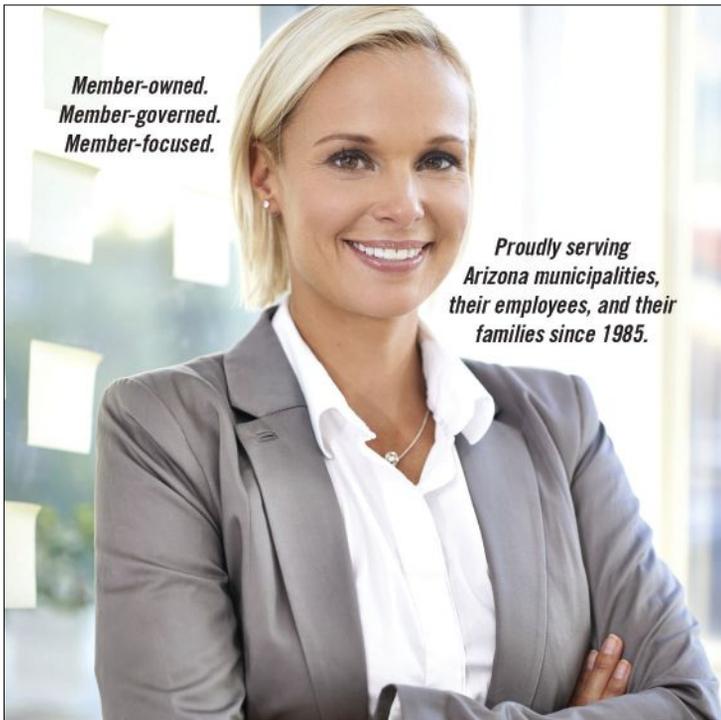
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