

SUN CITY WEST

Silver Celebration

— The First 25 Years —

Edson F. Allen, Editor



Sponsored by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society

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This book is dedicated to:

The Del Webb Corporation and its people who transformed a barren desert into the beautiful community we enjoy today...

The Pioneers who saw potential through the construction dust, banded together to create today's clubs and organizations, and provided leadership in so many ways...

The Volunteers — past, present and future — whose time, talent and energy have created a caring and well-cared-for community.

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INTRODUCTION

Newcomers to Sun City West are impressed with its gently curving streets, neat homes, lovely landscaping, lush golf courses and inviting recreation centers. Few of them realize that 25 years ago, this was the home of the Circle One Livestock Company with its thousands of cattle — land that, according to one rancher, was “fit only for raising lizards.”

The transition from “Lizard Acres” to the lush oasis that is Sun City West today is a far-ranging story of a company with extraordinary vision, along with the extraordinary people who came to live here. They were men and women who chose an active lifestyle for their retirement years, applying their time, energy and creativity to the shaping of a new community. As a result, we who live here today live in one of the most successful active adult retirement communities in the nation.

“Sun City West’s Silver Celebration – The First 25 Years” is sponsored by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and written to commemorate the community’s 25th anniversary on February 15, 2003. It is fitting that we pause at this quarter-century mark to record the beginnings of Sun City West so that its remarkable story is not lost in the inevitable march of time.

The retirement of the first Baby Boomers promises to bring new people, new interests and new leadership to our community. This history is for them, too, as they need to understand the past that shapes our present, and gives momentum to the future. The changes that have taken place over the past 25 years have been immense as the area was transformed from a desert to a city. The changes in the next 25 years likely will be more subtle, but no less significant. It is our hope that this history will provide perspective to those new to the community as they become involved in the continuing transformation of Sun City West.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society (SCAHS) initiated and sponsored the effort to record the history of Sun City West's first 25 years. Phyllis Street, former president of the Society's Board, was instrumental in getting the project started early. In 2000, she recruited Ed Allen who indicated interest in writing the history of Sun City West, thinking the story could be told in 25-30 pages. Much to his surprise, he was shown the 272-page book prepared for the 25th anniversary of Sun City in 1985 and told, "We envision something like this."

Allen agreed to head a Sun City West History Committee, and immediately recruited Street as a member. The goal was to have the history published by February 15, 2003 — the 25th anniversary of groundbreaking.

Local newspapers helped bring this project to the attention of residents, many of whom volunteered to serve on the History Committee. Some served a short time to complete a specific task, while others formed a core, ongoing team. Without the dedication and dogged determination of *all* these people, the deadline would never have been met. This would have been a "short story" indeed.

Committee members are listed below; two came from Sun City. Jane Freeman, one of the authors of "Jubilee," the Sun City history, provided valuable insight into the events leading up to Sun City West, as well as access to many former Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO) personnel. Thank you, Jane!

Special appreciation is extended to Chuck Roach, former Sun City West general manager, and to Tom Ryan, former vice president of planning for DEVCO. We are also grateful to John Waldron of the Del

Webb Group as he was instrumental in seeing that photos, newsletters and promotional materials regarding Sun City West were given to the Historical Society for archiving. These documents provided helpful insight into the growth of the community. We also thank him for granting permission to us to include many of the photos in this book.

Many other residents, business people and local organizations contributed to this history, and are too numerous to mention by name. The WESTER, SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT and DAILY NEWS-SUN made their files available to us, directed us to reporters who had covered specific subjects and gave us permission to reproduce photos from their newspapers. The Rec Centers newsletters were another helpful source of information and office personnel graciously answered our many questions. Collectively, we offer all these sources our grateful appreciation.

Jane Freeman, Eleanor R. Nelson, Barbara Brozman, Phyllis Street, Judy Schoeberle, Mary Silvis, Betty Stoneking, Larry Carlino and Lee Vogel each researched certain portions of this history, and provided written commentary which made the final writing a much easier task.

The book's cover was designed by the talented Paul Turley, and we appreciate his willingness to donate time and creativity to this project.

We also thank our copy editor, Bruce Ellison, for the many hours he spent bringing consistency and clarity to the text. A special "Thank You," too, to Briarwood Country Club for hosting our monthly committee meetings and providing some of the best coffee in town!

Finally, many committee members had spouses who had to put up with a new priority in their midst – this history project. We thank them, and hope they will get as much enjoyment from reading this story as we got from preparing it.

The Sun City West History Committee:

Ed Allen, Chairperson	Barbara Griggs	Jan & Don Schmidt
Dee Balaker	John Larson	Judy Schoeberle
Barbara Brozman	Elaine McCraith	Mary Silvis
Larry Carlino	Eleanor R. Nelson	Phyllis Street
Louie Coor	Maxine Riffil	Lee Vogel
Jane Freeman	Jo Ruck	

PREPARING THE WAY FOR SUN CITY WEST

“Jumpin’ Jehoshaphat, this land isn’t fit for raising anything but lizards,” exclaimed an early rancher when he viewed the desert that would become Sun City West. A decade earlier, Del E. Webb had looked at the nearby desert and seen potential for an active adult community. The success of Sun City had confirmed his vision and as it neared completion, others in the Webb organization began looking westward for a successor community.

Chapter 1

Del Webb – The Man



Delbert E. Webb 1899-1974

The story of Sun City West begins with a man named Delbert Eugene Webb ... a high school dropout who went on to found one of the largest and most successful construction companies in the United States. Never content with his past accomplishments, Del Webb continually searched for new opportunities. In the late 1950s, he

recognized one such opportunity in the growing number of retirees, and became convinced that if he built a community offering an active adult life style, they would come. And, come they did! In less than a decade, the population of the original Sun City swelled to more than 40,000, setting the stage for Sun City West and successor communities across the nation. Delbert Eugene Webb was the man who made it all possible.

In the lobby of the old Del Webb corporate office in Phoenix hung a portrait of Delbert E. Webb. The inscription read:

"Mr. Webb was a legend in his own time. A quietly colorful man, warmly human, inherently honest, with a creative business imagination. His friends came from all walks and stations of life – from U.S. Presidents to common laborers."

Webb was born in Fresno, California, on May 17, 1899. His mother was the daughter of a German farmer who built one of the first irrigation systems in the state. His father, the son of an English evangelist, was a contractor and an amateur baseball player who passed on to his son the tools of both trades – a carpenter's saw and a fast ball. And the young Del Webb took these tools with him when he moved to Phoenix in 1928.

Mr. Webb was a man of many interests and he came to control one of the largest construction operations in the country. He headed and sat on the boards of 31 corporations and had partnerships or major interests in innumerable companies.

He was a quiet, unassuming man who preferred to avoid publicity. One national writer dubbed him the "Bashful Barnum." He stood 6' 4" tall and looked as lean as a range rider at 200 pounds. He could exude the same sort of level-eyed laconic western charm as a Will Rogers or a Gary Cooper. He was as equally at home with presidents and kings as he was with carpenters and construction workers. He never lost the common touch.

What was his secret of success? He applied the rules of baseball to business. Baseball taught him the value of having a happy team. He surrounded himself with one of the most loyal, closely knit and talented groups of executives in the business. He recruited his team members young, started them at the bottom and brought them up the corporate ladder once he knew their potential. He established an or-

ganizational framework with freedom for others to do well under his direction.

Another Del Webb was the sportsman. A long-time love of baseball eventually led to his being not only co-owner of the New York Yankees along with Dan Toppings, but also president of the American League. During his 20-year reign as co-owner, the team never had a losing season financially and did almost as well on the field, winning 15 league championships and 10 World Series crowns.

A second love was golf, and playing to a seven handicap at age 70, he was well known on golf courses all over the country. True to his nature, he played with caddies as well as the pros, sometimes beating them.

His love of speed attracted him to auto racing as a sponsor of many drivers. And he traveled fast – always by plane.

Another Del Webb was the humanitarian. He gave generously but quietly and without fanfare, especially if it would help a boy or a girl. At his death, the bulk of his estate went to the Del E. Webb Foundation which is dedicated to the furtherance of good health and science.

Delbert Eugene Webb, who died on the Fourth of July, 1974, was indeed the master of his fate.

Chapter 2

Del Webb – The Company

The Del Webb Construction Company was founded in 1928 - one year after Del Webb moved to Phoenix. The company started by hanging doors at the Westward Hotel in Phoenix, varnishing doors at the Barry Goldwater residence and building shelves and cabinets for the A. J. Bayless grocery stores. From this humble beginning grew the Del Webb Corporation, one of the largest construction companies in America.

We know Del Webb as the man who built the Sun Cities. Prior to that, his accomplishments were many and virtually unknown to most.

During World War II, the company built some of the West's biggest military installations in record time. Nearby Luke Air Force Base was one of many contracts. Fort Huachuca near Sierra Vista, Ariz., was built in less than 90 days. In addition, the Webb Corp. built VA hospitals, industrial plants and warehouses in 26 states. During the Korean conflict, technical plants were built for the production of guided missiles and for modification of fighter planes. Huge runways for B-47 bombers were constructed. Del Webb's passion for honesty won him the distinction of being awarded a large military contract by President Roosevelt on the basis of his word and a handshake according to the Webb organization.

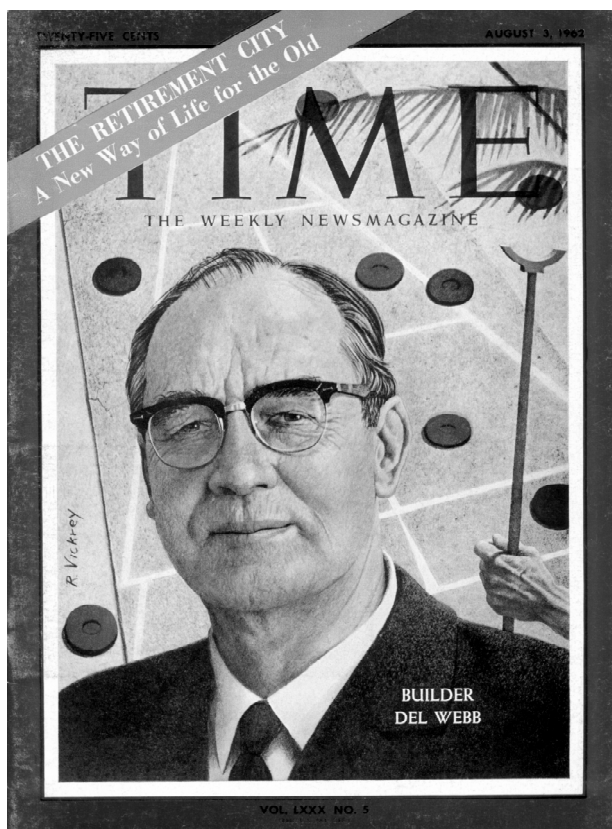
The Webb Company went on to build multi-million dollar manufacturing plants, as well as an engineering plant in Arizona for the Hughes Aircraft Company and a nuclear field laboratory in California. Then came the largest rocket test stand ever built at Edwards Air Force Base followed by a \$62,000,000 minuteman missile facility in Montana and a \$31,000,000 Titan Silo near Wichita, Kan. Closer by are the college at Tempe (Arizona State University), Phoenix Union High School, St. Joseph's Hospital and numerous office complexes.

The company even got into housing and was responsible for post housing for Air Force personnel at Offutt, Whiteman and Vandenberg Air Force bases. These were in addition to civilian housing in Arizona, California and Florida. The entire town of San Manuel, Ariz., was built for the Magma Copper Mine Corporation in southwestern Arizona.

Las Vegas beckoned and a filling station was built for the Union Oil Company. The first real gambling palace on the strip, the Flamingo Hotel, ran into financial trouble and, as a favor to a banking friend, Mr. Webb took it over only to find he had a binding contract with Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel. This casino experience extended to the building of many casinos/hotels in Las Vegas and Atlantic City. The book, *Del Webb, A Man, A Company*, reports that Webb's was the first publicly owned company to enter the gaming field and at one time was regarded as the biggest name in the gambling Mecca.

For several years, the company moved into the recreation and leisure field with marinas on Lake Powell and Lake Mead. It also operated rafting tours on the Colorado River. These businesses were eventually divested from the corporation.

The company continued to be strong in commercial building and property management until the late 1950s when the



TIME Magazine acknowledged Del Webb's contributions in a feature story on "The Retirement City" in its Aug. 2, 1962, issue.

idea of a retirement community came to the front.

The Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO) was formed as a subsidiary of the Del E. Webb Corporation to undertake senior housing. This quickly became the mainstay of the Webb Corporation despite the sociologists and others who thought an adult-only community in the desert was doomed to fail. The opening of Sun City in 1960 quickly showed them to be wrong.

In the mid-1980s, Webb's Sun City operations had become the most successful of its many diverse operations. During the late 1980s, the company decided to divest its gaming and leisure operations, discontinue its construction and commercial real estate division, and concentrate solely on the development of active adult communities. Webb's biggest gamble, retirement communities, had become the future, and such communities are to be found across the country today.

Toward the end of the century, interest began to shift toward family and multi-generational housing, and this, too, has proven successful.

The Evolution of Company Names:

1928 – 1960	Del E. Webb Construction Company
1960 – 1966	Del E. Webb Corporation
1967 – 2001	Del Webb Corporation
Sept. 2001	The Del Webb Group - name change after merging with Pulte Homes Inc., which became the new owner.

Chapter 3

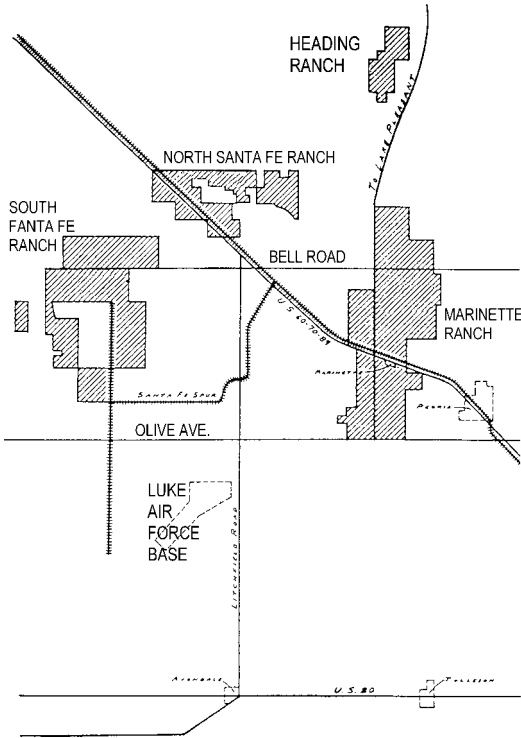
From Farmland to a Retirement Community

In June 1959, L. C. Jacobson, Executive Vice President of the Del E. Webb Development Company (51% owned by the Del E. Webb Construction Company and 49% owned by the J. G. Boswell Company) announced the purchase of the 20,000-acre Boswell ranches lying northwest and west of Phoenix for more than \$20 million. It was probably the largest financial exchange of agricultural property in Arizona history.

The ranching spread – actually two large operations known as the Marinette and Santa Fe Farms, and a smaller one identified as the Heading Ranch – would continue to be farmed by the Boswell Company until such time as the Webb Company needed it. Boswell Company had been actively engaged in cotton ginning, oil milling, commercial cattle feeding, citrus groves and vineyards in Arizona since 1927.

A unique aspect of the Boswell property was its water supply. It not only had water for crops but also was a part of the Maricopa County Municipal Water Conservation District No. 1, which had the Lake Pleasant Dam 15 miles north from which to draw further water supplies. The new Webb properties extended from a point north of Peoria, in a southwesterly direction through the Marinette area to the White Tank Mountains near Luke Air Force Base. The Marinette Ranch lay west of Peoria and extended north-south seven miles. In the Marinette area, it was bisected by the Phoenix-Los Angeles highway (US 60) and by the Santa Fe Railroad.

The North Santa Fe Ranch lay north of the Litchfield Road intersection with US 60 and for several miles paralleled both sides of the Phoenix-Los Angeles Highway we now know as Grand Avenue. The



Location of the four Boswell ranches purchased in 1959 by the Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO). It was agreed that Boswell would continue to operate the ranches until such time as they were needed for construction.

Research also included reports and opinions from noted sociologists and gerontologists, many of whom, when asked if a retirement community would succeed, replied “You’re crazier than hell.” Others, however, said, “Go for it.”

Del Webb’s reaction to these conflicting reports was “I hope you guys know what you are doing. Go ahead,” he told his staff.

And, go ahead they did. The Webb firm proposed to build a complete community for senior citizens consisting of: top-quality masonry homes priced from \$8,500 to \$11,500; commercial, recreational and medical facilities; and even an agricultural center where residents could “grow their own.”

South Santa Fe Ranch, also served by the Santa Fe spur, lay at the western edge of the Salt River Valley northwest of Luke Air Force Base. Over the ensuing years, some of this land was sold.

At the time the land acquisition was announced, it was also said that plans were being drafted for the development of the land. Plans were officially announced in September 1959. The Webb Company had already spent four-and-a-half years researching retirement communities from Florida to California, and it had determined that Arizona trailed these two states in percentage of residents in the retirement category.

Research further showed that the biggest single problem facing retirees was inactivity; hence, communities should be planned for an active lifestyle.

The Sun City concept was not Del Webb's alone. It was developed by a team, although Webb gets the credit, and the use of his name as a marketing tool paid off. Since 1960, Sun City developments have emerged from coast to coast. It soon became obvious that the guys knew what they were doing.

On January 1, 1960, a total of 237 homes was sold as 100,000 people visited this new concept of retirement living on New Year's Eve weekend. Five model homes were priced from \$8,500 to \$11,750. Since the required down payment was only \$500, sales were brisk.



On January 1, 1960, Sun City welcomed its first visitors. Cars lined up for two miles along Grand Avenue, waiting to get into the new development. Some 100,000 people toured the five model homes and 237 homes were purchased during the first weekend.

Unlike Florida, where retirees bought property with the expectation of golf courses and recreational facilities to come, Sun City was ready to go. The big selling points were the swimming pool, golf course, and a recreation center with fully equipped craft rooms, all open for use. “Active retirement” became a reality and that term is still used today when selling new Sun City developments.

By the end of 1960, 1,300 homes had been sold and Sun City boasted a population of 2,500 people. Seventeen years later, some 42,000 called Sun City home and it was Arizona's seventh largest city.

Chapter 4

From Lizard Acres to Sun City West

Back in the 1940s, R. S. Spurlock and J. C. Wetzler of Holbrook, Ariz., were looking over a proposed 1,900-acre site for a new ranch one mile east of the intersection of Grand Avenue and Bell Road. It is said Spurlock declared, “Jumpin’ Jehosophat, this country isn’t fit for raising anything but lizards.” Hence, the name “Lizard Acres” more formally known as the Circle One Livestock Company. This was to become one of the leading cattle operations in the southwest.

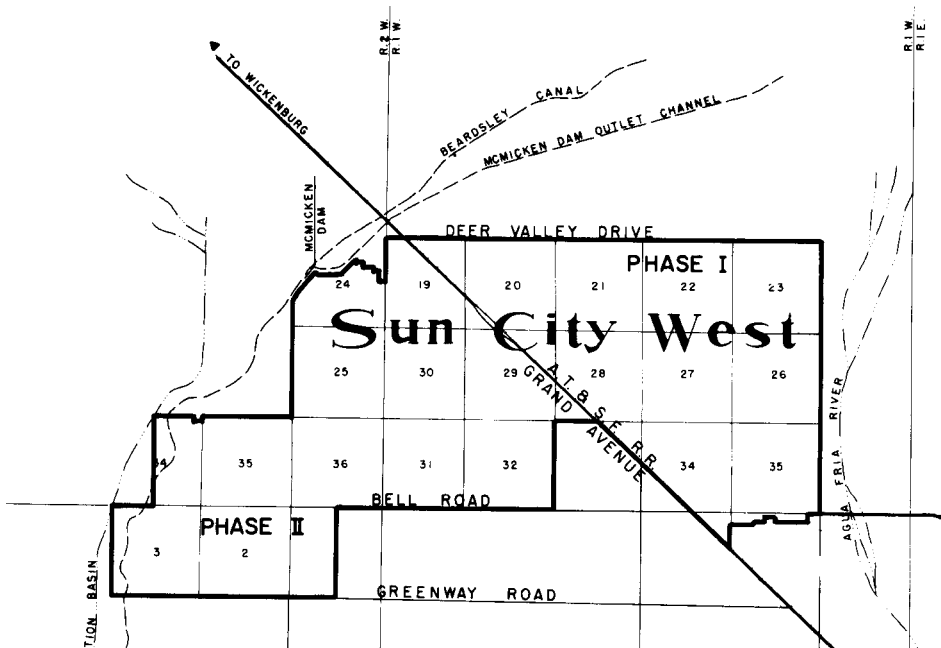


While the Lizard Acres feed lots have given way to attractive homes, this small sign remains along the Santa Fe tracks, one-half mile north of Bell Road. *Photo courtesy R. Murray*

In September 1944, Mark Gemmill of Prescott was named foreman of the operation. Three months later, his wife and baby joined him, moving into a trailer on the site. Ranch hands lived in trailers or tents. It was pretty primitive, with all sharing a single outhouse. The Gemmills were able to move into a permanent home in February, where they would live for 30 years raising three children before the house was bulldozed to make way for Sun City West.

Not far from the Gemmill home were rows of cattle pens topped with shade awnings. These had been designed by Mr. Wetzler and built by Mr. Gemmill, a first for the cattle industry. The feed lot pens also were constructed by Mr. Gemmill and were located on an 80-acre site. Water sprayers were fitted to each cattle pen to help keep the dust down. At its peak in 1970, the Circle One feed lot consisted of 1,800 acres and approximately 40,000 head of cattle.

The farming operation kept about 1,000 acres under cultivation with a variety of products. Three irrigation wells and two domestic wells provided water. And some are now providing water to Sun City



The plan for Sun City West announced by John Meeker envisioned a city built in two phases. Phase I, today's Sun City West, would consist of the land east of Grand Avenue and north of Bell Road. It was estimated that Phases I and II would have a total population of 70,000.

West. There was a large water tank in the feedlot adorned with a red lizard that was used as a weather vane.

In 1971 and 1972, the Del E. Webb Development Company purchased 13,000 acres west of Sun City, including the Circle One Ranch, for future development. The entire property consisted of a combination of 15 parcels under separate ownership, although a major portion was acquired from the J. G. Boswell Company. This was the same Boswell whose land was the birthplace of Sun City.

In January 1975, John Meeker, president of DEVCO, announced plans for a second adult community on this land. The first part of the area to be developed would be north of Bell Road and northeast of



This June 1978 aerial view shows the earth being shaped for the new community. A lake has been carved out of the center of what will be Hillcrest Golf Course. Construction has started on Crestview Vacation headquarters, the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center and the first major streets. The Circle One Livestock Company buildings are at lower right, along with feedlots and the huge grain storage bins. *Photo courtesy of the Del Webb Corporation*

Grand Avenue. Development of Sun City West, as it would be called, would depend on the sale of the remaining area in Sun City.

In an interview with Mr. Boswell, he recalled that with the purchase of the new acreage, John Meeker concentrated on the area near the center. Meeker said, "I'll build an open pit mine, excavate a big hole and in it will become a golf course ringed with vacation apartments on one side, and a restaurant will look down on the golf course and white sand traps."

Work on the new community began at the Lizard Acres site. A Webb representative met with Mr. Wetzler and Mr. Gemmill to work out a plan whereby they could get water for their use, and Webb could get water to take care of the new golf course.

One of the more challenging jobs of demolition involved the underground grain storage bins. They were huge, almost like bunkers used in wartime. The bins were V shaped, solid concrete and had a system of elevators. The workers finally resorted to dynamite and blasted them to pieces.

At the height of construction in 1978, 30 scrapers were moving some 45,000 cubic yards of dirt a day. An older style of life was demolished and a new community began to emerge from the desert. Good-bye Lizard Acres, Hello Sun City West!

THE PIONEER YEARS: 1978 AND 1979

The first prospective purchasers in Sun City West found a community under construction. Dust, dirt and crickets were everywhere as land was scraped and shaped to conform to a master plan. The first residents arrived in October 1978, and settled into an unfinished, incomplete community. With true pioneering spirit, they not only survived, but thrived.

Here is the story of the first 15 months and the amazing accomplishments of those “pioneer years.”

Chapter 5

New Beginnings

The Vision

The overwhelming success of Sun City bred confidence and optimism among Webb executives. The guiding vision for Sun City West became “bigger and bolder” and was driven by John Meeker, president of Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO).

The story is told of how Mr. Meeker’s wife was in the hospital at the time that the initial land survey was completed. An oversized, preliminary map was delivered to Mr. Meeker, and he began to sketch in the new community as he spent hours at the hospital to be near his wife.

The first element in his grand plan was a major golf course in the center of the community — one that would be of professional caliber and the site of future Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournaments. Along the western edge of the course would be an entertainment complex larger and grander than any built before. On the northwest corner would be a sports pavilion with bowling, swimming, tennis, dancing and more. (*See Fig. 1*) Next to it would be a giant auditorium



John W. Meeker, Jr., president of Del E. Webb Development Company and the man whose vision saw “A new sun rising in the west” – a brand new, active adult community springing forth from the desert much as Sun City had 15 years earlier. Mr. Meeker started as Mr. Webb’s golf caddy, joined the firm and moved into increasingly responsible positions. He was named president of DEVCO in 1965 and held that position for 16 years. *April 1981 SCW Activities Calendar*

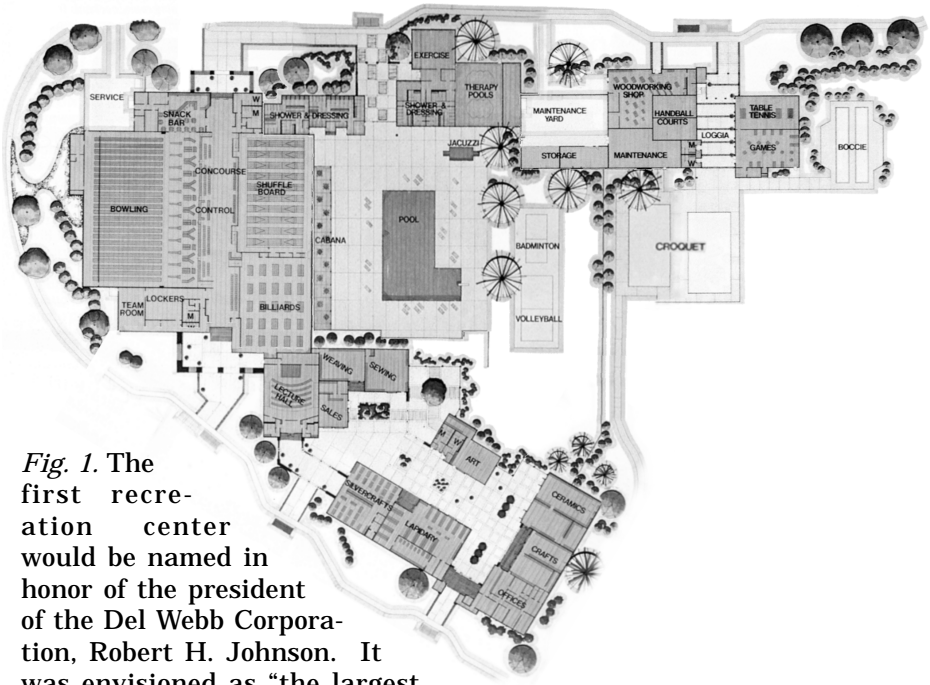
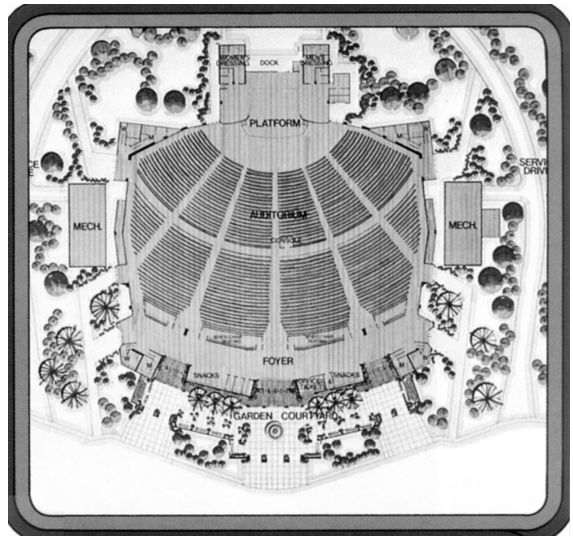


Fig. 1. The first recreation center would be named in honor of the president of the Del Webb Corporation, Robert H. Johnson. It was envisioned as “the largest private facility for recreational and creative activities in Arizona.” Sketches shown are taken from the earliest brochure promoting Sun City West.

Fig. 2. The Sundome, a 6,800-seat center for the performing arts was to become “a multi-purpose auditorium that will not only accommodate virtually every type of musical or theatrical event, but also enhance each event specifically.” It would have “deeply cushioned continental seating, a highly sophisticated sound system and a great forecourt flanked by charming garden alcoves to be the perfect place to meet friends at shows.”



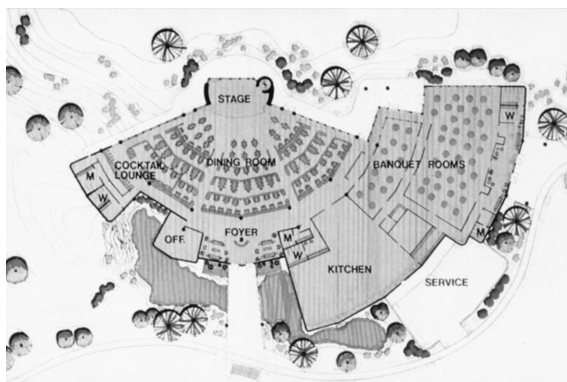


Fig. 3. A Dining and Social Club was envisioned for a “spectacular site overlooking Sun City West’s great central golf course” between the Sundome and Vacation Headquarters. It would have a “lavish clubhouse, featuring a terraced theater dining room, cocktail lounge and grand ballroom.”

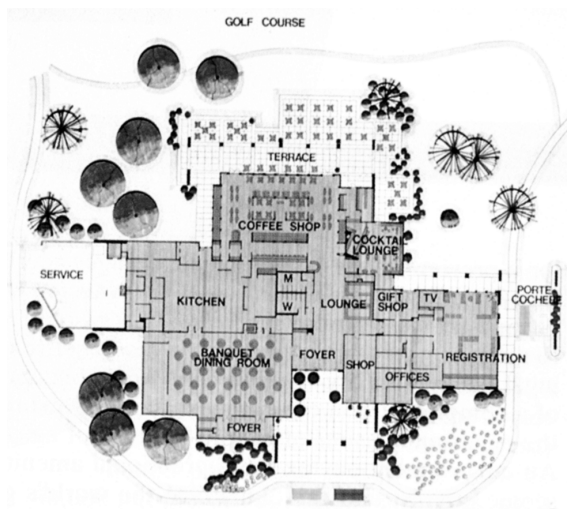


Fig. 4. A Sun City West “Vacation Headquarters” would serve as the “gateway to resort-retirement living” for guests staying in the nearby vacation apartments. The building would also include the Crestview Restaurant for both guests and residents, a cocktail lounge, banquet room and gift shop. *Sun City West sales brochure 0153*

that would accommodate the record crowds that attended the outdoor Sun Bowl in Sun City, but able here to enjoy shows indoors in air-conditioned comfort. (*See Fig. 2*)

Realizing that there would be need for smaller theatrical events, Meeker envisioned a dinner theater next door. (*See Fig. 3*) Finally, he provided for a major restaurant overlooking the golf course, complete with private banquet rooms and an informal bar where residents could meet and relax. This would become the Crestview Restaurant in the Sun City West Vacation Headquarters. (*See Fig. 4*)

Meeker drew in major roads that curved gracefully through the community. He set aside space for a regional mall to provide a wide range of shopping opportunities for a city of 70,000 or more. His plan also foresaw the need for a hospital and related healthcare facilities.

It was a bold vision indeed as one looked at the barren desert.

Selling the Vision

People eagerly accepted Meeker's vision for the new community, helped by a scale model of the planned amenities. Many drove out to the construction site to see what was going on, and to select a home site. What they experienced was far different from the picture painted of the future.

The only route into Sun City West was an old dirt road starting at about Bell and Dysart roads and winding through the feedlot. Visitors using the road often got lost in the maze of cattle pens as dirt roads led in every direction. Some people probably wondered if they really wanted to "pioneer" in such an area. Was this really where they wanted to retire?

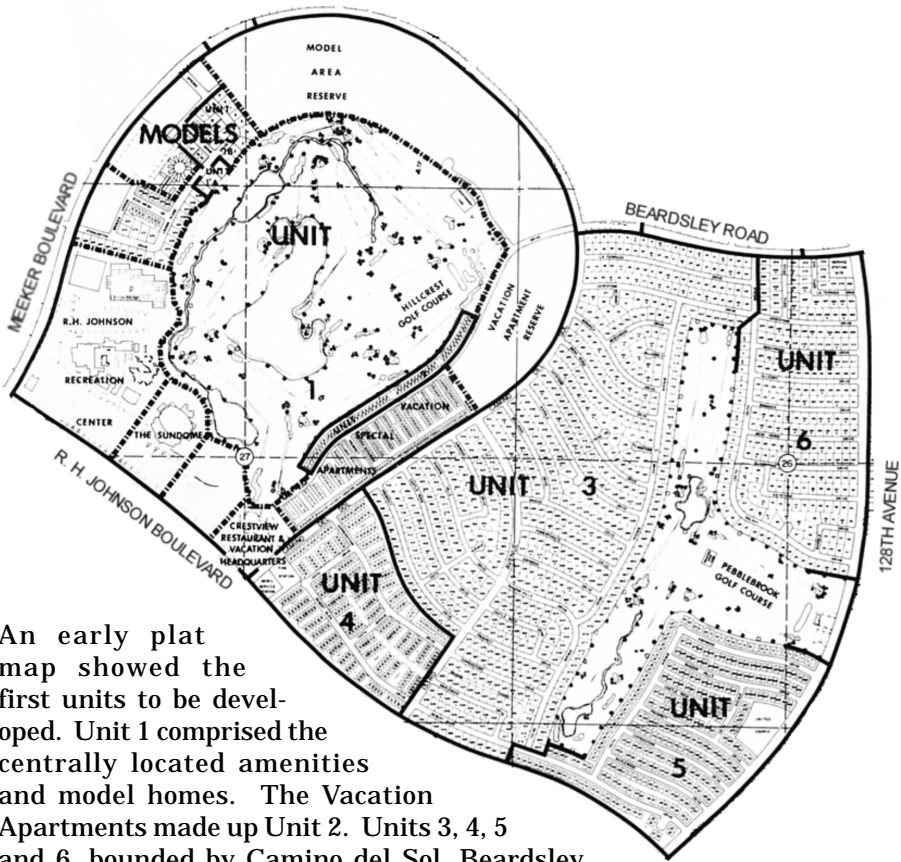
The first residential unit was built south of the main core area and cut into a portion of Lizard Acres. When things really began to take off, Webb brought in R. H. Johnson Boulevard, first as a two-lane road, and finally as the four-lane boulevard we know today. It was named after the president of the Del Webb Corporation, Robert H. Johnson.

Groundbreaking Marks the Official Beginning

On a bright February 15, 1978, some 500 civic and business leaders turned out to shovel soil and officially set into motion the construction of Sun City West. Because of the lack of good roads into the center of the then-future community, ceremonies were held one half-mile north of Bell Road along an extension of Dysart Road.

Adding spice to the groundbreaking ceremonies were color-coded balloons which indicated various future sites. Spectators were provided with a color-coded map and as the balloons ascended one could hear, "Green, that's 22, the Sundome Theater," or "Yellow, that's the recreation center," "Blue, the vacation apartments," "Red, it's the library," "Orange, the neighborhood shopping center," and so on. Once the breadth and scope of the first 5,700-acre first phase had been established, the groundbreaking began in earnest.

Master of Ceremonies John Meeker told how society was taking a fresh look at older Americans, and how Sun City's message of active and meaningful retirement living was being recognized all over the country. The Rev. Leslie Rose, pastor, First United Methodist Church of Sun City, gave the invocation and cited an excerpt from the liturgy for the dedication of new homes.



An early plat map showed the first units to be developed. Unit 1 comprised the centrally located amenities and model homes. The Vacation Apartments made up Unit 2. Units 3, 4, 5 and 6, bounded by Camino del Sol, Beardsley Road, 128th Avenue and R. H. Johnson Boulevard, contained sites for the first homes along with the first nine holes of Pebblebrook Golf Course.

First shovelsful were turned by Meeker; Arizona Governor Wesley Bolin; U. S. Senator Dennis DeConcini; Chairman of Del Webb Corporation, R. H. Johnson; and the Vice President and General Manager of the J. G. Boswell Company ranching operation, Hank Raymond. Governor Bolin praised the Webb Company for its contribution to the state in well-planned communities. DeConcini said, "This [Sun City West] is an example, not a trial and error, but the construction of a new city committed to family life." Hank Raymond promised the cattle feeding operation would be moved to another area less desirable for urban development.

Name That Street!

As land was being cleared in April 1978, DEVCO asked for suggestions for street names. Within a few weeks, more than 5,000 names were received. Most prolific was a Dallas woman who planned to live in Sun City West and sent in 1,100 names. Many of the names submitted were duplicates, and knowing that Maricopa County would throw out any names used elsewhere in the west valley, DEVCO personnel pored over flower catalogs, Spanish dictionaries and western living catalogs looking for additional ideas. A few numbered streets were tossed in to keep residents from getting lost in the new community. No one seems to want to take credit, however, for the confusing use of the same number on adjacent streets, one being an "Avenue," the next a "Drive."

One county official said that street names could not be proper names, personal names or have unusual spellings. Despite that suggestion, somehow R. H. Johnson Boulevard, Meeker Boulevard and Pyracantha Drive appeared on the final approved plat.



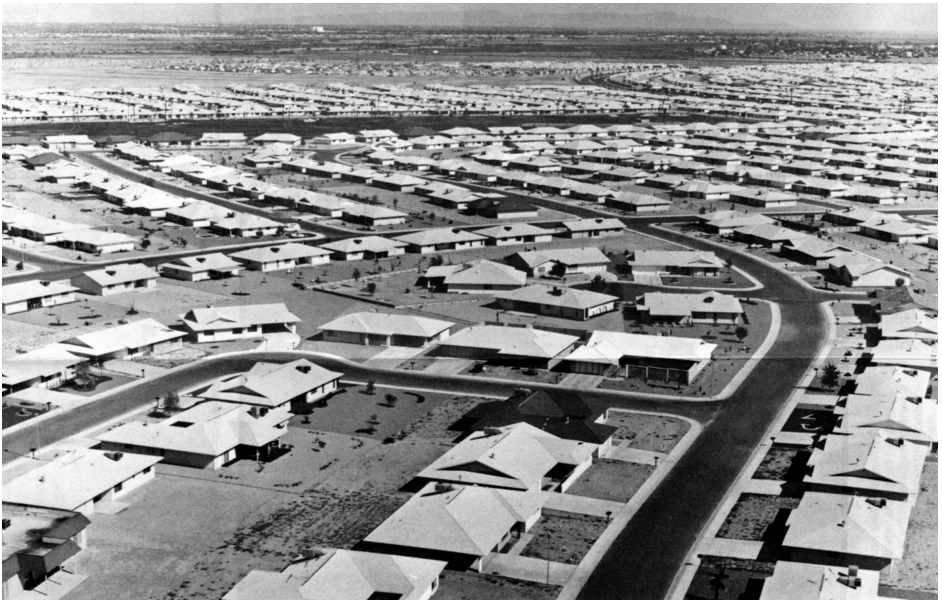
February 15, 1978, marked the groundbreaking for Sun City West. Shown here making it official are (l. to r.) John Meeker, president of DEVCO; U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini; Hank Raymond, J. G. Boswell vice president; Robert H. Johnson, chairman, Del Webb Corporation; and Arizona Governor Wesley Bolin. *March 1978 SCW Activities Calendar*

Chapter 6

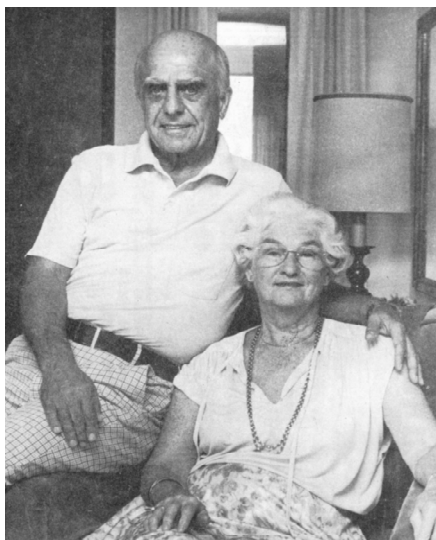
Pioneer Homes

A “Good Investment” Drives Early Home Sales

Offering prospective purchasers a selection of model homes had proved highly successful in Sun City. The rapid build-out of Sun City caught the Del Webb Corporation without new models for the new city. As a result, the first buyers made their choices from the final Sun City models. Those 19 model homes are located at 104th Avenue and Wheatridge Drive in Sun City. Base prices ranged from \$36,990 to \$70,490 and a wide range of upgrades was available.



Homes by the hundreds, but little traffic, few people. *August 1979 SCW Progress Report*



Two couples picked up keys to their new homes on October 16, 1978, and were honored as Sun City West's first residents: (left) Luman and Mary Wick from Topeka, Kansas, and (right) Edward and Clarice Uhl from Alameda, California. (Sept. 16, 1979 *Daily News-Sun*)

First Impressions

Loise Copes, an early resident, told of moving into Sun City West: "The first day we entered, the road in, which was R.H. Johnson, had no walls on the sides. It was almost a single lane road ... and there was probably macadam on it, but there were so many trucks hauling materials in, it was a rough road, and it was covered with debris and sand from the trucks and materials they were hauling. It was very rough.

As we came in, it just seemed like a dead city. At that time there were 60 families. I think there were 118 or 119 people. They had started coming in October.

When we came in there were houses there, but not a person in them. I don't know how many there were, there were hundreds, but no people in them. There wasn't a blade of grass, not a bird, no trees, no landscaping. ... There wasn't a fly, we didn't have screens. We just thought it was paralyzed. We were very lonesome for people. However, on the cul de sac where we lived there were two other couples that moved in. They came over from Sun City. They were more knowledgeable than we were, and they were very helpful."

In 1978, real estate was seen as a good investment, and many Sun City residents were among the first to make deposits on homes to be built in the new community. Prices were increasing every few months, resulting in many people buying with the intent of selling, rather than moving in. For \$500 down, a couple could select a lot and the home to be built on it. Twenty percent was due when construction started, with the remainder due at closing.

The first homes were ready for occupancy in October 1978. Many sat empty for months as Sun City “investors” decided whether to move

First Residents

The Wicks were the first to move in, spending their first week living in a garden apartment as furnishings arrived and were unpacked in their new home at 13235 Maplewood Drive. Like many who moved to Arizona, the Wicks were leaving behind bitter and severe winters. Luman's recent open heart surgery required that he exercise regularly. “I had to go to shopping malls and walk around during the winter for my exercise,” he told the Daily News-Sun. “Now I play golf, swim and play pool. We wanted to be able to enjoy the winter time.”

Edward Uhl retired from the Navy in 1962 and he and his wife, Clarice, settled in California. While they found it hard to beat, they found it overcrowded, and not a desirable retirement area. They had visited Clarice's mother in Youngtown, Ariz., for 18 years but had never really looked at Sun City. After a number of stays at the Kings Inn, a Sun City motel operated by the Webb Company, they decided to look at the model homes in Sun City. “What we saw decided it for us,” said Edward. “At the time, we knew nothing of the plans for Sun City West.” They spent close to a year in their Sun City home before deciding to move to the new community at 13225 Desert Glen Drive. Edward was quoted in the Daily News-Sun as saying, “What you get for your money here is unbelievable. I can't believe so much can be had in view of inflation.”

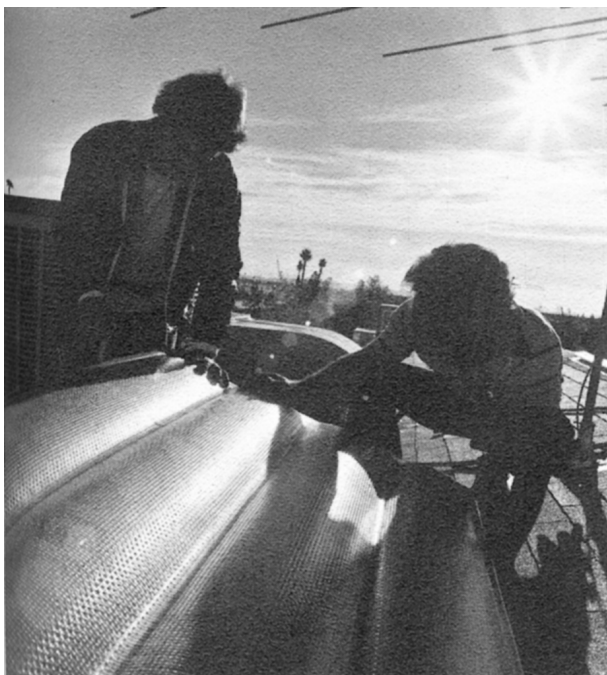
When the couples moved into their homes, R. H. Johnson Boulevard was one lane in each direction. The walls hadn't been constructed, and construction dust settled over the entire area. Both couples liked being “pioneers” in a new community.

to the new community, or to sell the new house as prices rose. Too many “investors,” however, resulted in a glut of finished homes with “For Sale” signs.

Meet the New Models

By December 1978, a new series of model homes was ready to open in Sun City West. Many people wondered how DEVCO (the residential development arm of Del Webb Corporation) could improve upon the earlier Sun City models. Named the Encore Series, the 20 models featured an energy-efficient package that included an evaporative cooler, double-paned windows and a solar water heater — a first for Arizona according to the Webb Corporation sales literature.

Many previously optional features were included with the result that base prices ranged from \$50,590 to \$99,900. The collection included 10 houses, four garden apartments, two patio apartments and four duplexes.



Sun-powered water heaters were a standard feature on early Sun City West homes. The State of Arizona allowed a tax credit of 65% of the installation costs that, along with energy savings, resulted in a “pay-back” period of less than 3 years. *Jan-Feb 1980 Webb Spin-*

DEVCO Components Factory

To speed production of new homes, a Housing Components Plant was built north of Bell Road near Grand Avenue. By 1979, the plant

Tumbling Tumbleweeds

It was a lonely existence at first as there were few people living in the many completed houses. Nellie and William Cox moved from Maryland to their new home on Beechwood Drive in 1978. Nellie remembers standing at her patio door looking out on a windy day. As she stood there, she felt like she was in the "Ole West" as she watched tumbleweeds roll by. At the time, there was nothing behind their house and the wind swept across unbroken desert. The Coxes later moved to their present home on 124th Drive, and Nellie recalls the time her husband was hospitalized in 1981. When she came home from the hospital one evening, she could not enter her home as tumbleweeds had filled their front courtyard.

The Great Cricket Drive

Dee Balaker recalled the hordes of crickets that plagued residents in the early years. Dee's home is on the south side of Beardsley Road, and when she moved in, there was only desert to the north. After repeated complaints from many neighbors, DEVCO arranged to have the desert area sprayed. Instead of starting along Beardsley Road and working north into the vacant land, the sprayers began out in the desert, working their way toward Beardsley. The net result was a massive "cricket drive," sending millions of the insects toward the homes instead of away from them.

Crickets Move Into a New Home

Like many early residents, the Silvises kept their original home for summer use. Returning to Michigan, they had a friend check their Sun City West home occasionally. One day, Mary Silvis received a call telling them that the inside of their new home was covered with thousands of crickets, driven there by all the grading activity taking place nearby. The neighbor took care of the crickets for the Silvises, and the first thing they did upon returning was to carefully caulk all the seams that the builder had missed.

was turning out pre-assembled electrical and plumbing units, roof trusses and wall panels for 21 homes a day. The Del Webb Corporation had entered the field of home component construction in 1971 when it teamed with General Electric Co. to build bathrooms and kitchens as modules. The company's newsletter, *The Webb Spinner*, reported that inside component construction enabled women to handle jobs generally associated with men.



The Housing Components Plant spread along Bell Road, west of the new community. Inside, more than 500 employees teamed with 1,000 DEVCO field personnel to complete as many as 21 homes a day. *Left photo: Del Webb Corporation. Right photo above: Jan. 16, 1979 Daily News-Sun*



The Finishing Touch

John Meeker felt installing mature trees was an important element in creating a community from a desert. "This helps provide continuity for people who have lived 50-60 years among lush greenery," he claimed.

Providing the greenery was a nearby oasis called Beardsley Nursery. Located along Grand Avenue in the vicinity of today's Sun City Grand, it had 100 acres of trees and shrubs, and employed more than 300 people. Run by graduate horticulturists, landscape designers and architects, the nursery achieved a 95-98% success rate on transplanting 6-to-7 year old trees.



The nursery supplying most of the trees and shrubs to Sun City West was Webb-owned and one of the largest nurseries in Arizona. At its peak, it was the temporary home for some 50,000 trees including 27 varieties. *July-Aug. '79 WEBB SPINNER*



What a difference a year makes! The top view, taken in July 1978, shows construction bounded by R.H. Johnson Boulevard and 128th Avenue. Note the rectangular feed lots at lower right. Crestview and the Vacation Headquarters Building was under construction to the left with the R.H. Johnson recreation complex just beginning to take shape at far left. The bottom view, taken in July 1979, shows more than 1,600 completed homes, the Hillcrest Golf Course, nine completed holes of the Pebblebrook Course, and in the upper left corner, R. H. Johnson Rec Center and the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts under construction. *August 1979 SCW Activities Calendar*

Chapter 7

Lifestyle of the Pioneers

Who Were the Pioneers?

The early residents found much in common as they settled into an incomplete community, surrounded by construction, dust and dirt. They felt like “pioneers,” and ultimately founded an organization with that name. In order to qualify for pioneer status, a person had to be living in Sun City West by December 31, 1979. And, they had to join the Pioneers Club in order to gain official status. The club didn’t actually form until 1984 Mildred Toldrian was elected the first presi-



First officers of the Pioneers of Sun City West Club were from left: Loise Copes, vice-president; Frieda Schwartz, secretary; Sol Robinson, treasurer; and Mildred Toldrian, president. Mrs. Schwartz was addressing invitations to the organization’s first luncheon at the Lakes Club in Sun City on Oct. 20, 1984. *May 29, 1984 Daily News-Sun*

dent. At its beginning, the club had a membership of nearly 1,000. Currently, membership is less than 300.

A Made-to-Order, Mail Order Home

Roger and Althea Curfman retired from careers in Cleveland, Ohio and visited Sun City in 1977. They looked over the model homes in Sun City and decided they liked the new area called Sun City West. Before returning home, they selected a model and a lot in the new community.

Further discussions with DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) were all done through the mail. The Curfmans were sent pictures of the styles of items available; they made selections, and mailed them back. As the home progressed, DEVCO sent pictures for their approval. The couple finally moved into their new home in August 1979. Althea recalls how exciting it was to be here and the close-knit nature of the community. One unexpected gift upon arrival was "Valley Fever" – an illness new to the Curfmans.*

They soon found that everyone was active and took part in everything. Roger taught CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) and swimming at the R. H. Johnson pool. Althea joined the Bicycle Club and would ride her bike everywhere, even to the grocery store. The fastest-growing club at the time was the Sportsman's Club, and it covered all kinds of outdoor activities: bird watching, hiking, rafting, fishing, skeet and more. Althea also recalls how the quality of the various crafts improved over the years, and finally brought about the Village Store where handcrafted items are sold.

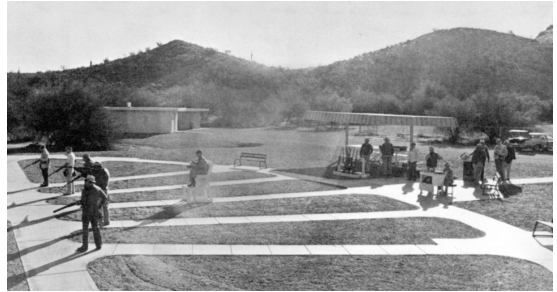
Althea has been active in many clubs, and most recently was president of the Pioneers Club, a post she held twice before. She also was one of the original library volunteers, working there for 23 years.

**Valley fever is caused by wind-blown spores from disturbed ground infecting the lungs.*

“Resort-Retirement Living” Without the Resort

Del Webb’s goal was more than building houses. He wanted to provide an environment that “fostered a richly rewarding recreational, social and cultural life.” He called it “resort-retirement living” and it was perhaps best exemplified in the multi-faceted recreation centers that were planned for the community.

Unlike Sun City, there was no recreation center available when the first residents moved into Sun City West. The dust and sounds of construction were ample evidence that work was under way, but the “resort” portion of “retirement living” was months away.



The Heading Ranch offered opportunities for square dancing, trap and skeet shooting, and picnics. Facilities were washed out by the same flood that destroyed the Bell Road Bridge in February 1980, and were never rebuilt. *February 1980 SCW Activities Calendar*

DEVCO and the Recreation Centers of Sun City negotiated a reciprocal agreement that allowed Westers guest privileges for bowling, billiards, shuffleboard, swimming and mini-golf in exchange for Sun Citians being able to use the first Sun City West golf course. The agreement ran through June 1, 1979.

This agreement also provided for joint tenancy of the Heading Ranch Range by the two communities. The ranch facility, located west of 99th Avenue on Jomax Road, included trap and skeet, a rifle and pistol range, archery and a picnic area with covered cabanas, dance floor and stage. Meeker expressed appreciation for the “neighborly attitude” exhibited by the agreement and added, “We feel there are many

ways the two communities will be of mutual benefit in the future. This sharing at the very beginning is a positive step.”

The agreement to let Sun City West residents use their facilities, however, met with protest by those living in Sun City. They feared being “overrun by 75,000 guests” even though the actual number of residents in the new community was a few hundred. Limitations such as being restricted to one pool at either 6am or 9pm made the Sun City West guests feel unwelcome. As a result, DEVCO arranged al-

Let DEVCO Entertain You!

It would be unfair to blame DEVCO for the unpacked boxes in Loise Copes' second bedroom, but Loise had a choice to make. Many new arrivals chose to concentrate on landscaping, decorating and settling into their new homes, but Loise and her husband wanted to explore their new environment. And the tours that DEVCO offered while the rec center was being constructed offered them that opportunity

They remember trips to the Capitol, the Barry Goldwater residence, the zoo, and even to a taping of the Erma Bombeck TV show. Many of these trips would end with a stop at the then Del Webb -owned Mountain Shadows Hotel for tea and the “best baked goodies.”

Not all the trips were in town. Tucson, Nogales, copper mines, Indian reservations, Sedona, Flagstaff and Lake Powell were some of the other destinations. Residents were also treated to tours of Luke Air Force Base, including lunch and a close-up look at the airplanes. In the process, they learned why they shouldn't object to planes flying overhead.

One of the really special events was to see a Phoenix Suns game. All it required was catching a bus at 6pm outside the Vacation Headquarters Building to be taken to the arena. Del Webb had a big box and offered it to residents. Loise reported that, “We became very strong fans of the Suns as a result!” Once the R. H. Johnson Center opened, the bus service stopped. Gradually, the long drive to the Suns game, the parking and cost of tickets caused all but the most fervent fans to turn their interest to local activities.



In January 1979, the Crestview Restaurant opened its doors to a spacious dining room seating 265 and banquet facilities for 320. Its large windows gave an unobstructed view of Hillcrest's green fairways. *February 1979 SCW Newsletter*

ternate activities and tours for residents until the opening of the R. H. Johnson sports complex.

The Vacation Headquarters Building served as the center of social activity for the first few months. In addition to its Crestview Restaurant and lounge, it offered space for card playing, square dancing and other activities. It also housed a visitor information office, beauty salon, gift shop and AVIS Rent-A-Car office. Tours left from here, and an activity desk told of coming events.

Golf Becomes the First Resort-Style Amenity

Work on the Hillcrest Golf Course had started well before the official groundbreaking, as golf was a key sales feature for many prospects. Hillcrest was laid out with future Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournaments in mind, and offered challenging play with water coming into play on 14 holes. The new course opened on Feb. 17, 1979, and at the time was called "one of the three most challenging courses in Arizona."

Six resident-only courses were planned for Sun City West, and work had already begun on two as Hillcrest was under construction. Pebblebrook opened for play in September 1979 with residents entitled to one free round during the first two weeks of that month.

Pioneers Organize Own Clubs

After moving in, residents looked for opportunities to meet their neighbors. People with common interests began to form their own clubs. One of the first was a Bicycle Club with as many as 50 cyclists setting out after breakfast for an hour's ride through the community. Card playing was popular, and bridge, canasta and pinochle clubs sprung up. They were joined by an art club and various dancing clubs including a Saturday Night Dance Club. By June 1979, 14 clubs were meeting regularly.

R. H. Johnson Social Hall Opens in March 1979

Named for the then chairman of the Del Webb Corporation, the huge sports complex spread over 48 acres. First to be completed and opened was the Social Hall. In the following months other sections were finished, and residents soon had a broad range of activities available: swimming, bowling, tennis, fitness equipment, lawn bowling,



This April 1979 photo shows the R. H. Johnson Center nearing completion. The tennis courts are complete, and outlines of the lawn bowling courts are visible. The first model homes may be seen beyond the tennis courts. The large building at the top was the sales pavilion for the first and second series of model homes. Hillcrest Golf Course is at upper right and the library at lower left. *Photo courtesy of the Del Webb Corporation*

bocce, badminton, mini-golf, croquet, shuffleboard, billiards and more. The center included seven arts and crafts workrooms, plus space for woodworking. According to the Webb organization, it was the largest recreation center in the southwest.

With the opening of the R. H. Johnson Center, annual homeowners' fees were \$60 per person in 1979 and 1980. While it seems a modest sum today, it came as a shock to early residents as it was 50% more than that paid by Sun City residents at the time.

R. H. Johnson Social Hall Was Initial Home for Many Faiths

In March 1979, the joint Sun City-Youngtown Ministerial Association discussed holding a Protestant worship service in Sun City West. Already in negotiations to purchase property on which to erect church buildings, representatives of five denominations accepted the invitation to conduct a combined "trial" service during April. Clergymen of five faiths, American Lutheran, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, and United Presbyterian, formed an "Interim Chapel" that met each Sunday in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall. The joint-worship format with rotating leadership continued through November 1979. At that time, their numbers had grown to the point that they were able to separate and hold their own services. During this period, the Catholics had also been using the Social Hall for Sunday Mass. All continued to meet at R. H. Johnson for several years before moving to new church homes.

Wildlife Guests

Maurice Street had carefully raked the gravel in his yard, erasing the footprints left by his young grandson when playing in their yard. At that time, there was no wall along the back of their lot, facing El Mirage Road. The next morning, the Streets were amazed to find huge paw prints crossing their back yard, prints larger than those made by a rabbit or coyote. The Posse was called and identified them as prints of a mountain lion! Building of the wall along El Mirage Road in 1980 did not stop Mr. or Mrs. Lion from making repeat visits, even walking across their patio.

Bus Service to Sun City

In February 1979, DEVCO launched the Sun City West bus line. Running from 9am to 3pm, Monday through Saturday, the bus (actually a van) made a trip around the community each hour. Fares were 35 cents per ride, with 20 rides for \$5. Since there were no stores nor a post office in Sun City West, DEVCO expanded the service in September to include six round trips a day to Sun City, Monday through Saturday. Vans left from Crestview, traveling to Bell Camino, Greenway, Thunderbird, Grand and LaRonde shopping centers, as well as Lakeview Medical Arts Center and Boswell Hospital.



A group of Sun City West residents prepared to board the bus for home after shopping at Bell Camino Shopping Center in Sun City. *September 1979 SCW Newsletter*

Flood Destroys Bell Road Bridge

Heavy rains in the Bradshaw Mountains drained into Lake Pleasant north of the Sun Cities during the monsoon season of August 1979 and filled it to capacity. Frequent rains the following February threatened Waddell Dam that formed the lake, and the rate of water discharge had to be increased. That water, combined with saturated soil, resulted in a flood sweeping down the Agua Fria River, pushing brush and debris ahead of it. The surging water tore at the footings of the Bell Road Bridge, and on Friday, Feb. 22, 1980, it gradually settled



The rain-swollen Agua Fria River washed away the supports beneath the Bell Road Bridge, and it sank into the floodwaters in February 1980. It would take 18 months for a new bridge to be completed. In the meantime, traffic was diverted along a temporary road in the river bottom. *Photo courtesy Althea Curfman*

into the flood. The Grand Avenue Bridge was closed as waters topped the 14-foot mark and lapped at the roadway. But it held, and Sun City West residents had one route to stores.

As soon as the water receded, Maricopa County and DEVCO personnel rushed to build a temporary crossing. The first Ladies Professional Golf Association tournament was to be hosted at Hillcrest Golf Course within days, and many attendees crossed the makeshift bridge. That bypass remained in service for the next 18 months until the new bridge was completed.

Library Opens in October 1979

DEVCO arranged for the Sun City Library to provide services to Sun City West residents until the new library was completed. In early 1979, the Maricopa County Library District began sending a bookmobile out once a week. It parked on the northeast corner of R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol.

October 16, 1979 marked the opening of the new Sun City West Library. Inside were stack space for 40,000 volumes and a comfortable reading room. Evelyn Cornish, librarian, announced that library hours would be Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm. The bell tower was the tallest structure in the area, and could be seen for miles across the flat desert land that was to become a city.

Annual Grape Festival

For many years, the nearby J. G. Boswell vineyards had been opened in late July to residents of Sun City. Now, those living in Sun City West were also invited to pick the ripe, tasty Thompson Seedless, Perlette and Exotic grapes at the Cactus Lane Ranch on Cotton Lane. Car-pooling was encouraged to reduce traffic into the area, but long lines of thousands of autos entered before daylight. All were guests of the Boswell family and DEVCO, which put their own employees into the fields to direct the picking and to provide refreshments. "It was like a grown-up Easter Egg hunt," said one picker as he watched men and women carrying buckets, sacks and cans, and searching under and through the long rows of vines for the tasty grapes. 1981 marked the last year for the annual Grape Festival for residents.



Thousands of residents from the two Sun Cities arrived early for the annual Grape Festival held at the Boswell vineyards on Cotton Lane. *August 1979 SCW Newsletter*



Visible for miles across the flat desert landscape of 1978, the library's Spanish bell tower quickly became a Sun City West landmark. *Photo courtesy of V. Kerschner*



Following the library ribbon-cutting ceremony in October 1979, Librarian Evelyn Cornish (left) checked out the first books to Sun City West's first residents: Clarice and Edward Uhl, and Luman and Mary Wick. *November 1979 SCW Activities Calendar*

Pioneering an Active Lifestyle

Del Webb's vision of active retirement living blossomed in Sun City West. The many amenities offered residents variety in how they spent their time. Right from the start, however, residents showed an interest in more than entertainment, becoming active in the governing of the community, forming service organizations and volunteering their time. A proposed school bond issue in the Dysart school district which then included all of Sun City West, galvanized action that led to the formation of PORA (Property Owners & Residents Association). A desire for a safe and well-maintained community led to the Posse and the PRIDES. All of these organizations, and more, are covered in later chapters. But all drew on the time, energy and talent of dedicated early residents who "pioneered" the example of service to others, still prevalent in the community a quarter-century later.

*They came from all over
Our glorious nation.
These diverse men and women
Of the same generation.
From Nebraska, New York,
South Carolina, too:
New Jersey and Texas
To name but a few.
They came not for gold,
These pioneers,
But to bask in the sun
In their retirement years.
To swim and to golf
To explore the Southwest,
To enjoy each other
That was their quest.
So here's to the folks
Who unlike the miners,
Found the gold in their lives...
The 79ers.*

— Mrs. Sylvia Lustig,
Sun City West

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

The inhospitable desert landscape gradually gave way to curving streets, beautiful homes, lush golf courses and luxurious resort amenities. Sun City West was destined to become a complete community, offering residents places to worship, shop, bank and obtain basic services without ever having to leave town.

As a result, Sun City West residents truly enjoy “everything under the sun.”

Chapter 8

Residential Development

The new community was off to a strong start. More than 1,200 homes were sold in 1978 — less than half the 2,850 that would be sold in the first full year — and new residents began arriving in October. Construction activity was at a peak as the R. H. Johnson Recreational Complex, the Sundome for the Performing Arts, Vacation Headquarters, guest apartments and homes were all under way. Sales were so strong that Webb officials revised their forecast for the completion of Phase I from nine years to *five!*

How Big Was Sun City West Supposed to Be?

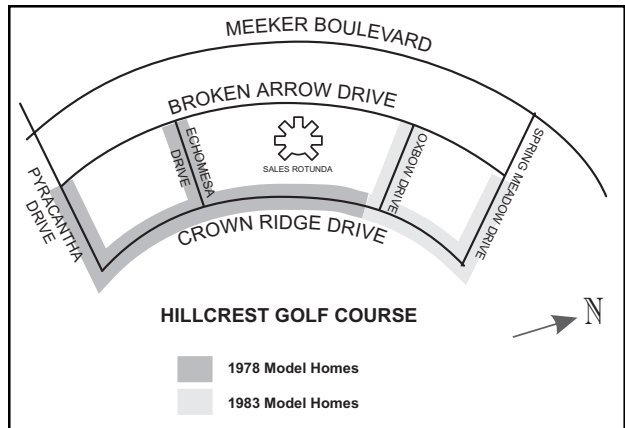
Initial forecasts for the new Sun City West were in the 70-75,000 range according to various news articles of the time. Phase I, the portion northeast of Grand Avenue with a little less than half the total acreage, was projected as having a population of 32,500 according to the early brochure given to prospective buyers.

Tom Ryan, vice president of development for DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company), worked from a different set of figures. The new community was planned to have the same average density (2.3 homes per acre) as Sun City. He also projected 1.8 residents per home based on Sun City figures. With 5,700 acres in Phase I of Sun City West, Ryan's projection was for a final population closer to 25,000.

Both figures appear in print, but Ryan's projection turned out to be the more accurate. In 1992, the Webb Corporation purchased 1,335 acres to the north and when the final homes were completed in this "expansion area," Sun City West's final population topped out at just over 31,000 – slightly less than that indicated in early promotional material.

The Encore Series of homes continued to be popular, and the models were visited by tens of thousands during their four-year life. In September 1982, two models based on a “shared house” concept were introduced, offering two unrelated parties a chance to share the cost of a home. December saw nine new models opening, followed by six more in early 1983. Base prices ranged from \$49,900 to \$198,500.

These models were placed to the east of the Sales Rotunda that had been constructed along with the 1978 models.



The 1978 Encore Series of model homes opened in December 1978 along streets south of the Sales Rotunda. In late 1982, a complete new series of model homes was built to the east of the Sales Rotunda, and the earlier models were sold.

A Step Up In Luxury

Watching the growth of affluent areas in other parts of the Valley, John Meeker decided Sun City West was missing out by not offering luxury homes to attract the well-to-do. The community could boast of golf courses and recreational facilities that were unmatched elsewhere. He was certain that larger homes on larger lots were all that were needed to attract a wealthier clientele.

In 1982, two new models were opened: the 4,200-sq. ft., Spanish-style “Monterrey,” base-priced at \$375,000, and the 4,680-sq. ft. English manor-style “Tudor” at \$395,000. The latter included a 900-sq. ft. “Great Room,” a library, maid’s quarters, butler’s pantry, separate dining and breakfast areas, and an exercise room off the master bath. Among the host of fine interior touches were a spiral staircase leading to a study loft, Roman columns lining the entry to the living area, arched doorways throughout and a tiled garage floor. Outside security shutters could be programmed to close when the sun struck them.

Other options and additions easily drove the final prices to \$500,000 or more.

To accommodate luxury homes, six large lots were set aside along the west edge of Briarwood Country Club on 135th Avenue. All were bought within days of being offered. Lots on the north side of Briarwood were reconfigured to provide space for the projected sales of these large, up-scale homes.

The models drew some 25,000 lookers in the first three weeks. While the exposure was great publicity for Sun City West, the wealthy clientele failed to appear. Timing of this introduction came just as interest rates sky rocketed. Only the two models were ever sold, and DEVCO returned to focusing on homes that had a broader market appeal.

Impact of a Slowing Economy

The initial building boom did not continue for long. Interest rates began to skyrocket and adversely affected the Del Webb Corporation in two ways. First, mortgages became more expensive. Potential buyers found it difficult to sell their houses in order to purchase a new one in Sun City West. Home sales dropped steadily until only 147 new homes were sold in 1982.

Second, the Del Webb Corporation carried a great deal of debt from its many investments in casinos and other businesses, as well as in Sun City West infrastructure. Faced with rapidly growing interest payments, the company developed a plan to sell assets to reduce debt. Some of the decisions directly impacted the future of Sun City West.

Vacant land southwest of Grand Avenue, reserved for Phase II, was sold. This reduced the eventual size of Sun City West by more than half. That smaller population could not support a regional mall, and announcement of a new mall (Arrowhead) further east on Bell Road, caused that idea to be abandoned.

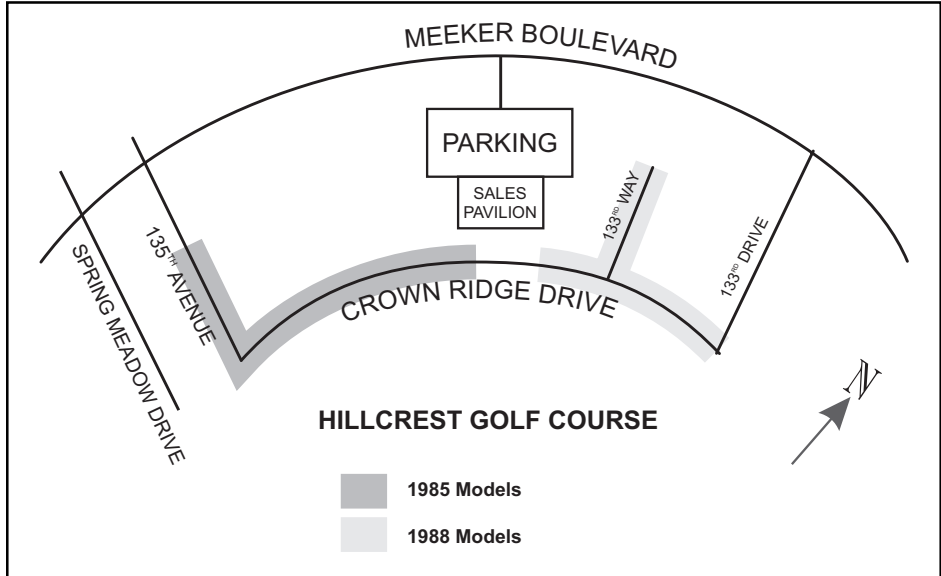
Certain parcels within Sun City West were sold to private developers to raise needed cash. Development of a dinner theater next to the Sundome had been postponed, and alternate uses for that prime parcel were examined. A 1982 feasibility study indicated "a resort hotel with appropriate facilities and amenities could be successful in Sun City West on this site." The study envisioned a 150-room hotel with average annual occupancy of 65%. A 100-seat specialty restaurant and 100-seat cocktail lounge would also be part of the package. But no hotel developer was interested, and the land was sold for still-pending condominium development.

Interest rates receded in the mid-80s, and the Del Webb Corporation sold its casinos and other businesses to focus on building adult communities. The company's health was gradually restored. Housing sales picked up steadily and Sun City West soon provided income enabling the company to expand its successful active adult community concept to Tucson and Las Vegas.

New Models Every Three to Four Years

1985 marked the 25th anniversary of the opening of Sun City and in commemoration, the Silver Edition series of model homes opened further east along Crown Ridge Drive along with a new sales center. These homes were the first with vaulted ceilings, stucco exteriors and tile roofs. Base prices ranged from \$69,300 for a 933-sq. ft. garden home to \$199,800 for the top-of-the-line, 2,817-sq. ft. single family home.

Adjacent to the new models was the House of American Ideas. It was designed by Taliesin Associated Architects (a successor firm to Frank Lloyd Wright), and reflected the Webb organization's interest in the future. The 1,600-sq. ft. six-sided home was designed to bring

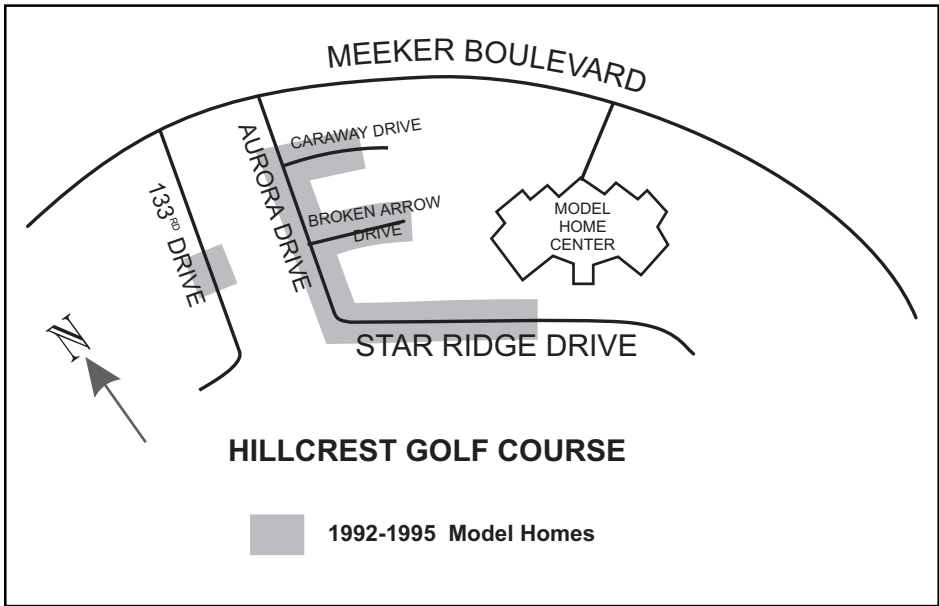


The 1985 Silver Edition series of model homes were opened to the west of a new sales pavilion. Four models were added in late 1987 with one of these located two blocks away. A new International series opened in November 1988 to the east of the sales pavilion.

the outdoors into the home's interior. It had a verdigris copper roof, fired brick exterior and an arborium complete with aviary and bird bath in the center of the home. It was intended as a marketing tool rather than a production house, although some of the more popular features were incorporated in later models.

Sixteen new models opened in November 1988 to the east of the 1985 models. Known as the International series, these models featured Southwestern, Spanish Colonial, Mediterranean and Continental exteriors. Most significantly, they were the first to offer natural gas. Other "firsts" included homes with separate guest suites, and air conditioners mounted on the ground instead of on the roof. "Patio Homes" were renamed "Executive Villas." Base prices were virtually the same as in 1985.

A new sales center and 14 new models opened in 1992. Base prices now ranged from \$76,500 to \$203,500. In 1993, the two original casitas were replaced by three newer models, and four single-family homes were added facing 135th Avenue. In 1994, these latter models were



Location of the 1992-95 series of model homes and a new Model Home Center. In 1993, four models were opened facing on 133rd Drive. Two proved so popular that they were rebuilt along Aurora Drive, and the 133rd Drive models were sold. Space had been provided for a final series of model homes along Star Ridge Drive, but the community sold out before these were needed.

sold. Two had proved to be very popular, and they were built again on Aurora and Caraway drives, along with four other new models. Six new models were added in 1995, followed by three more in 1996, bringing the total to 24. Prospective purchasers now had the widest selection of homes of any adult community in the Valley and perhaps in the U.S. More than 135,000 people from around the world visited the model homes annually.

From Beginning to End

In August 1998, the last two new homes in Sun City West were sold, letting Irene Engel close out her long sales career. Engel was on hand when the Del Webb Corporation opened its first model homes to the public back in 1979. She sold one of the first five houses, and now had sold one of the last. Over the years, she sold Sun City West homes worth some \$75 million.



Irene Engel

Engel was recognized for her outstanding sales performance year-after-year. Along the way, she raised five children through college as a single parent and was an active member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic parish. When asked her feelings about finally retiring in her mid-70s, Engel remarked that she would be leaving a lot of friends, both colleagues and customers.

Asked about customers she remembered, Engel told about "one elderly gentleman who arrived from the East Coast with his car packed with his belongings, and seeking a small place to settle." She found him a small condo he could afford and watched as the neighborhood ladies began to take care of him, calling on him and plying him with cookies and casseroles.

Engel always told her customers to call her if they were ever in trouble, and one day she heard from this man. He was in Boswell Memorial Hospital and asked her to do him a favor. "Call Del Webb for me will you?" he said, "and ask him to call the hospital. They've got me in bed and want to give me an enema. Have Mr. Webb tell them they better not try." Although Engel had met Del Webb once, she had no way of giving the message to a man who had died in 1974.

Three models were opened in 1995 on the western edge of Sun City West on Via Manana just east of Sonora Lane. Known as the Sonoran Neighborhood Collection, these were the same casita models introduced in 1993. Base prices ranged from \$94,900 to \$108,900.

No Place For Time-Shares!

In 1983, residents learned that DEVCO had sold 48 vacation apartments to Sun City Resorts International (SCRI) for resale on a time-share basis, and was proposing to sell them an additional 86 units. The time-shares were priced at between \$4,000 and \$9,000 per week. Purchasers of time-share units would be recognized as residents and have equal use of the community's recreational facilities. As part of the agreement, SCRI agreed to pay \$480 a year per apartment to the Recreation Association – six times the \$80 per person rate that local residents paid at that time.

The Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA) led the opposition, claiming that the recreational facilities already were overcrowded and that DEVCO was now trying to convert Sun City West into a resort instead of a retirement community.

Webb management reacted swiftly, buying back the 48 apartments they had sold for time-share use. Robert Swanson, chief executive officer of the Del Webb Corporation, reported the repurchase had cost the company over \$400,000, but they were pleased to do it based on the strong feelings of the community. Swanson joked, "I plan to spend the rest of my life in the Valley of the Sun and I don't want to have 65,000 enemies out here."

Time-share sales came up again in September 1997, when a Scottsdale-based firm proposed building a 60-room hotel and 58 time-share units on the site of Crestview. The Mamola family was trying to sell Crestview at the time, and was looking for alternate ways to develop the property. The community was strongly opposed to this suggestion, and the deal did not get off the ground.

Welcome to the 10,000th Resident

Population reached the 10,000 mark in March 1984. Comedian Milton Berle was on hand to welcome John and Hazel Telin as the 10,000th residents of Sun City West. When Berle asked them which one of the couple was the 10,000th resident, John quickly quipped: "She must be. I always come in second." The Telins said they moved

to Sun City West from Freeport, Ill., to escape the Illinois winters. “It’s such a warm and friendly place,” said John. “We’re looking forward to making new friends and enjoying the recreational activities of Sun City West.”



In March 1984, Milton Berle and more than 1,500 residents turned out to welcome the Telins — the 10,000th residents of Sun City West. *March 1984 SCW Activities Calendar*

“Sample Resort Living at Its Finest”

The appeal of an inexpensive week’s vacation in a furnished apartment had proven successful in Sun City, and was expanded in the new community. Guest apartments were built along the south edge of Hillcrest Golf Course, and between Star Ridge Drive and Camino del Sol. DEVCO decided to experiment with two-story apartments to maximize exposure to the golf course. The gamble succeeded. Climbing stairs proved not to be an obstacle, and the upper units turned out to be the most popular.

The first program cost “\$150 for a one-week stay that included golf, use of the recreation facilities, a breakfast and tour, chuck wagon dinner and lots of sunshine.” Those choosing to come during the summer months received two weeks for the same price.

At their peak, there were more than 300 vacation apartments available. This nationally advertised program and personal referrals were credited with bringing the majority of residents to Sun City West.

More than 50% of the home purchases came from those staying in a vacation apartment. In 1984, a National Relocation Assistance Program was added to help would-be buyers sell their previous homes by financing them at attractive, below-market rates. The program did not succeed and was short-lived.

Variety By Design

New models every three-to-four years added variety to the community. To further avoid a “cookie-cutter” look to the community, DEVCO’s sales department made sure that identical houses were never built side-by-side. A choice of three exterior elevations was offered for most houses and duplexes. As a result, while identical floor plans might be next to one another, the buildings appeared distinctly different from the outside.

Knowing that many mid-westerners wanted grass lawns, DEVCO offered certain models in areas with park-like expanses of grass. Irrigation systems were built-in, and residents shared the cost of lawn maintenance. Later, DEVCO offered models as part of a Homeowners Association. Residents paid a monthly fee that included exterior maintenance of the buildings, as well as of lawns, trees and shrubs.

In May 1984, DEVCO began construction of the Palomar apartment complex west of R. H. Johnson Boulevard and south of the Safeway store. Sixty-two units were completed and ready for occupancy in September of that year. Three floor plans were available with rentals ranging from \$430 to \$630 per month. Renters signed a one-year lease, and after paying the yearly recreation center fee, were entitled to use all facilities.



This 1979 aerial view shows the 326 vacation apartments under construction. These became the first taste of Sun City West life for visitors from around the world.
February 1979 SCW Newsletter

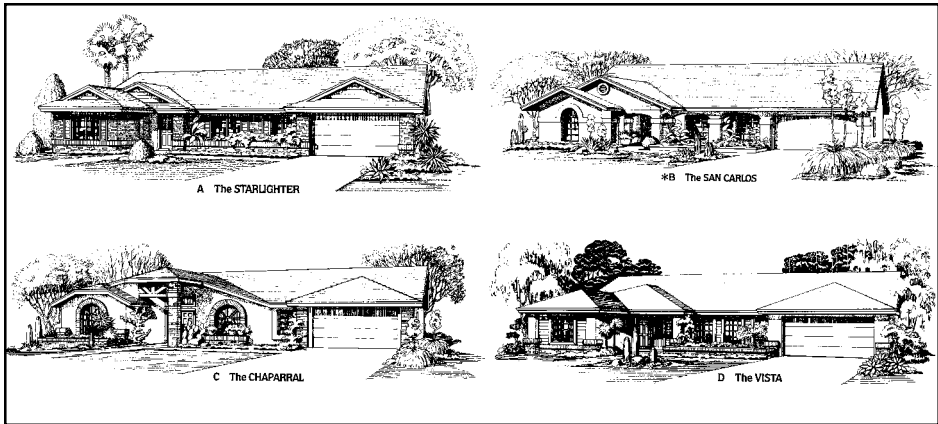
Soon after, the Danmoor Company announced plans for the Madison House, a 196-unit catered-living apartment complex at Spanish Garden and Lava drives. Rentals were on a month-by-month basis with no buy-in fee or lease. The development featured one- and two-bedroom apartments, a central dining area, activities room, pool and a 24-hour security system. While the apartments included kitchens, two meals a day were included in the rental price, along with weekly housekeeping service.

A Good Deal for Prospects

In Baltimore, Md., Loise Copes and her husband were planning to attend a convention of the National Association of Postmasters in Phoenix. They saw an ad in Modern Maturity magazine for a guest apartment in Sun City. Since its cost for a week was less than the daily cost of the convention hotel in downtown Phoenix, they decided to commute from Sun City. While they enjoyed the guest apartment, they were amazed at how far it was to the convention center.

Loise recalled that they became so interested in the program that DEVCO laid out for its guests that they spent more time in Sun City than at the convention. She especially remembered the Lakes Club and the square dancers who performed. Loise said, "They looked so much younger than we were. They were in those doll-like clothes and we were really impressed."

Mr. and Mrs. Copes had traveled all over the world with two other couples, looking for the best place to live. The dollar was very strong back in 1978, and they had found it would buy a great deal in places such as Mexico and Costa Rica. But when the Copeses and their friends came to Sun City, they found it had so much to offer that they couldn't resist buying houses in the new community of Sun City West. Their friends bought on the spot. Loise reported that, "We weren't quite as sure and found a week later that the price had gone up \$5,000.00." So, they bought the same model their friend had, before prices went up again. And, the guest apartment program won new converts to the new community.



The popular San Carlos model from the 1985 series offered a choice of three other exteriors, adding a variety of eye-appeal to the community.
H8506 Model descriptive sheet

In June 1985, the first assisted-living complex opened — Sunwest Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. This 132-bed facility is located at Camino del Sol and Meeker Boulevard.

“The Heights” Luxury Condominiums

In 1984, DEVCO decided to test the market for up-scale homes a second time, and drew up plans for “The Heights” – 90 luxury condominiums overlooking Hillcrest Golf course. These would be located on the vacant parcel between the Sundome and Crestview Vacation Headquarters. Three-story buildings atop the hill would offer magnificent views of the golf course and mountain vistas. Fourteen casitas would be located on the hillside sloping down to the golf course. Among the amenities would be a gatehouse to control access, underground parking, a five-hole putting green and a large pool area with cabana, spa and bar. A stream would flow from a fountain and fill ponds bordered by paths for leisurely strolls.

On paper, The Heights looked great. Unfortunately, not enough prospects were interested in the cost of all this luxury and the project was soon dropped.

In October 1995, McDonnell Douglas Realty announced new plans for this parcel. They contracted with The Ryerson Company to build a luxury condo complex complete with underground parking for the residents and ten luxury homes at the bottom of the hill along the golf

course. The condos would sell for \$295,000 to \$340,000. Before development could begin, the Boeing Corp. acquired McDonnell Douglas and spun off the realty business. Ryerson had to find a new partner and postponed further development in order to focus on planning for the larger, 20-acre parcel they had acquired in the city center.

Sun Valley Park Proposed

In late 1986, Sun City West residents were shocked to learn that Coronet Realty and Development had proposed a 108-acre community, Sun Valley Park, near 135th Avenue and Deer Valley Road. The company was seeking county approval for a change in the property's zoning from low density (one home per acre) to high-density residential. As a result of strong opposition from residents, the firm finally dropped plans to develop the property. Several years later, the land would be purchased by the Del Webb Corporation, and become an integral part of Sun City West.

The Pioneer Spirit

In 1911, young Orval Robertson filed for a homestead permit for 160 acres of land in the vicinity of what is now Tom Ryan Road and Deer Valley Drive. The land had a market value of \$1.25 per acre, but could be obtained free provided the homesteader occupied the land continuously for five years and cultivated a part of it for four of those years.

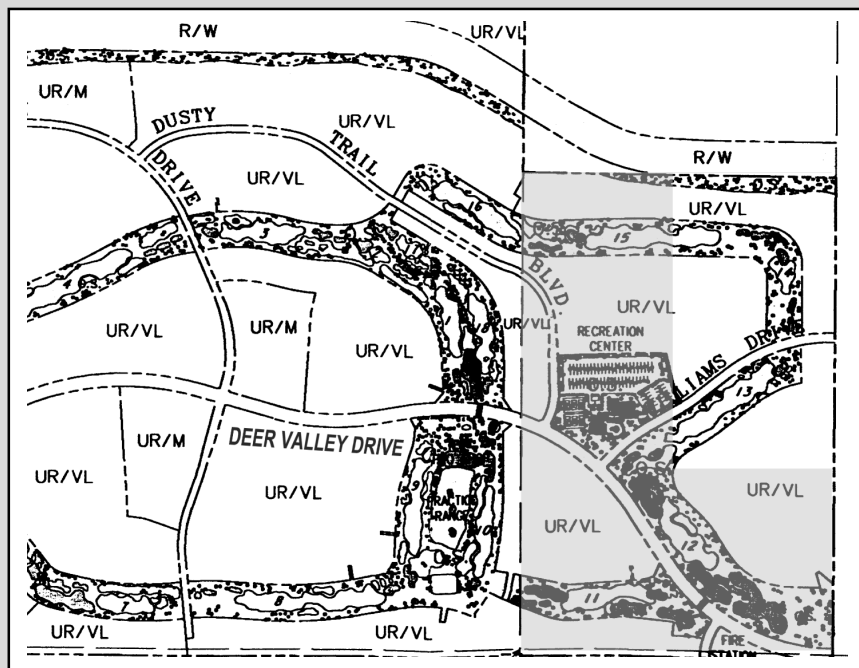
Robertson and his wife lived in a tent until they completed a home that October. Without benefit of a tractor or other machinery, Orval and his wife had to rely on horsepower and their own strong backs to break and cultivate the soil.

Within a year, they had 20 acres under cultivation. By 1915, that had grown to 80 acres of maize, sorghum, millet, pumpkins and more. Robertson created an irrigation system that used run-off water from the Bradshaw Mountains to the north, and well water. In 1917, the Robertsons fulfilled the provisions of the homestead law and were granted title to the land.

As the area under cultivation increased, so did the demand for water. Unfortunately for the Robertsons, the Agua Fria Water and Land Company dammed the water of the Agua Fria River in order to divert it to canals that would deliver the water to

farmers. But no water was planned for Section 15, the location of Robertson's homestead. The Robertson's dream dried up before their eyes. They abandoned the property sometime before 1930, and it reverted to the state in 1939.

Archeologists commissioned by the Del Webb Corporation found several artifacts left by the Robertsons: a small potbelied stove, a 1913 penny, coffeepot lid, girdle hook, mule shoe and more. But an even more important find was to be discovered less than a mile away.

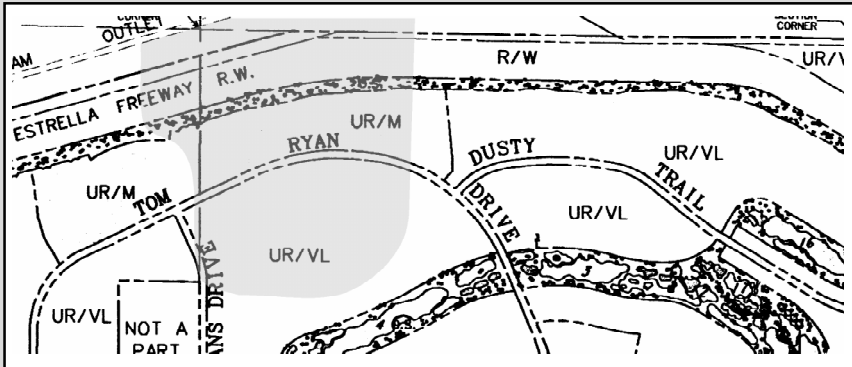


The shaded area shows the location of the Robertson's 160-acre homestead. As near as can be determined, their home would have been about where the 15th green of the Deer Valley Golf course is located.

Earliest Residents 500-900 A.D.

About a mile further west, the archeological survey team found evidence of a Hohokam presence dating back to possibly 500-900 A.D. The primary site was located within a wedge-shaped

area about 164 feet long by 300 feet wide near the McMicken Dam outlet channel. Since the site was far north of areas usually inhabited by the Hohokam, the archeologists surmised that the area might have been seasonally occupied for plant processing. Pottery shards and rudimentary tools were all that remained of these early settlers.

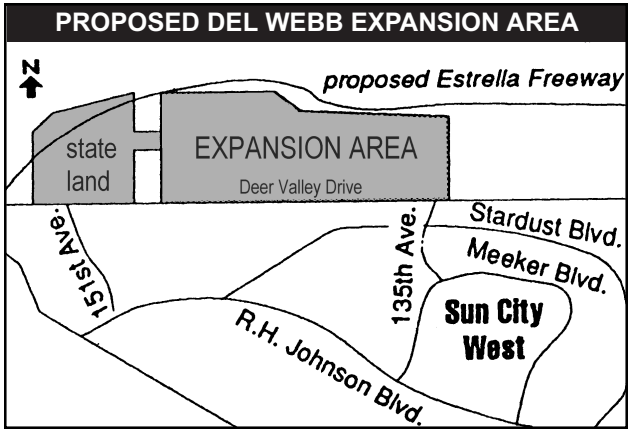


Pottery shards found at several artifact sites within the shaded area of the map indicated occupation of this area during the early Hohokam Colonial period, perhaps extending back to 500 A.D. There was also evidence that the northeastern Yavapai, a more mobile people, may have occasionally visited the area around 1150 A.D.

Community Expansion Brings Controversy

In early 1992, the Del Webb Corporation announced that they had purchased 885 acres bounded by the Bodine Orchard on the east, Deer Valley Road on the south, and the proposed Maricopa County Estrella Parkway on the north. They also expressed interest in bidding on state-owned land to the west when it came up for auction in June. Their bid of \$2.4 million was successful, and what was soon called the "Sun City West Expansion Area" increased to 1,335 acres.

The announcement of an additional 6,000 to 6,400 people met with a great deal of concern among Sun City West residents. Some claimed they had purchased with the promise that the city would have only 25,000 residents. Others objected to the increased traffic on 135th and 151st avenues. The leader of Citizens Alert was quoted as saying, "People will have to run a gauntlet between the communities on 135th



The Expansion Area consisted of two major land purchases – 885 acres between Deer Valley Road and the proposed Estrella Freeway, and approximately 450 acres of state-owned land. *July 1, 1992 Daily News-Sun*

and 151st avenues. If the county goes ahead and puts in four lanes on these two roads, a lot of people will be afraid to drive between the two communities.”

Citizens Alert advocated that the expansion area become a separate community and not encroach on Sun City West. Chuck Roach, a Del Webb Corporation vice president and Sun City West general

manager, explained the reasons a separate community made little sense and pointed out the many steps that were being taken to make the expansion area compatible with the larger community.

To those who feared that the three recreation centers would be overwhelmed by the added residents, Roach pointed to the promise of an additional center plus a new golf course. Housing density would be the same with the result that there would be no noticeable increase in the use of recreation centers or golf courses. Landscaping would provide a “Palm Springs look” with 840 palm and pine trees. Most significantly, the added population would mean more business for existing stores, and incentive to attract new ones to the community.

Maricopa County approved the Del Webb Corporation’s master plan subject to 21 stipulations, many of which were based on residents’ concerns. Cool heads prevailed, and Sun City West leaders worked with the Webb organization on details regarding width of major streets, the dropping of proposed signage on 135th Avenue, and the planning of the berm that would screen the northern edge of the expansion area from the future freeway. One county requirement that would bring future controversy was the abrupt end of Williams Drive at the outer wall. The County insisted, however, that the parcel to the east have

the option of access from the west when it was eventually developed, as the Del Webb Group is now doing.

Home sales started in February 1993, and construction on the new Palm Ridge Center began the following month. Grading of the new Deer Valley Golf Course was completed, and it opened for play in January 1994. As part of the compromise to integrate the expansion area into the larger community, the Del Webb Corporation agreed to expand and improve the three existing centers. They also agreed to limit any further expansion beyond 17,340 homes without approval of the Recreation Center's Governing Board.

Now, years later, the fears of congested streets and crowded recreational facilities have proven unfounded. The expansion area has become an integral part of Sun City West, and all residents benefit from the addition of the Palm Ridge Recreation Center and two fine golf courses.

An Island in the Expansion Area

In acquiring the 1,335 acres that comprised the expansion area, Del Webb Corporation was unable to purchase a 20-acre parcel right smack in the center. The land had been owned for years by the Fitzpatrick family and it was unwilling to sell. The company made several offers over the years, but the descendants decided to hold onto the land. Their patience was rewarded when they sold five of their acres to the Catholic Diocese of Phoenix for the Prince of Peace Church at 151st Avenue and Deer Valley Drive. The Diocese was reported to have paid \$440,000 — more than the Del Webb Corporation had offered for the entire parcel.

Timothy Fitzpatrick negotiated entry into the Recreation Centers in 1999 by agreeing to pay \$5,200 per unit at the close of escrow. Two



The August 1992 ground-breaking for the Sun City West expansion area included actor Alan Prewitt (center) playing the role of Orval Robertson, an early homesteader. He was joined by Dennis Zwagerman, Maricopa County Planning and Development director (left), and Chuck Roach, DEVCO general manager. *Sept. 29 – Oct. 4, 1993 Sun City West Independent*

years later, he announced plans to build 60 homes on the remaining 15 acres. This was contested by PORA and concerned residents, and 45 homes were approved. The County Board of Supervisors would not authorize a Senior Citizens Overlay Zone, but agreed to approve an Age Restricted Status which would be enforced through the use of CC&Rs (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions) by a Homeowners Association. As a result, the new homes should blend in with their surroundings, and the land will no longer be an island.



Eileen and Harold Haber, the first homeowners in the Sun City West expansion area, hold a “house” full of cookies presented to them by DEVCO officials. Aug. 25-31, 1993
Sun City West Independent

Filling In the City Center

The 55 acres bounded by Sandridge Drive, Woodside Drive and 139th Avenue (now New Traditions Way), had stood vacant during the development of the rest of Sun City West. Originally, this land had been set aside for a major regional mall, but plans for that were discarded with the development of Arrowhead Towne Center several miles east along Bell Road, and the elimination of Phase II of Sun City West, southwest of Grand Avenue.

In 1994, five acres were sold for a post office, and the Del Webb Corporation proposed building 300 casitas on the remainder. Opposition sprang up quickly as residents felt that would eliminate space for future life-care facilities. A compromise was worked out with Del Webb Corporation agreeing to build a maximum of 180 casitas on 30 acres, with the remaining land to be sold to a developer who would offer a continuum of care choices. Construction began on the first 45 casitas in December 1994. The detached homes came in three models, ranging in price from \$92,000 to \$106,000.

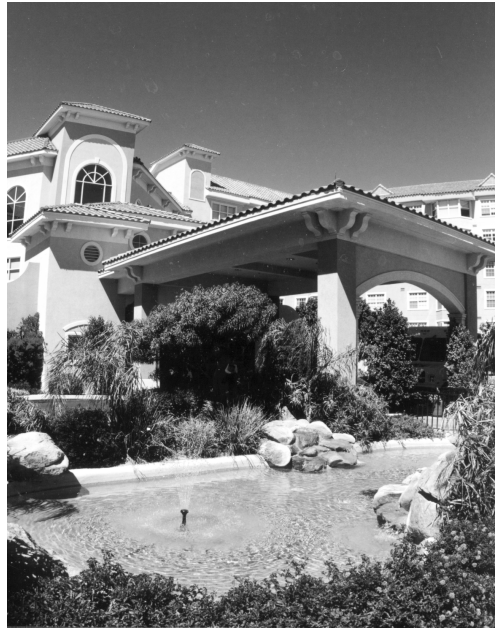
Grandview Terrace Alters the City's Skyline

As a result of the community's interest in additional living choices, The Freedom Group, Inc. partnered with Sun Health Properties in 1994 to build a multi-story independent-living facility on the 17 acres between Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital and Grandview Golf Course. In February 1995, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved increasing the height of the building from four stories to six with a total of 288 units. Construction of the Grandview Terrace Life-Care Community would begin early in 1996.

Residents along White Rock Drive organized to protest construction, claiming they had been told the land was zoned for commercial offices, and that the most that would be built would be a one- or two-story medical building. They filed a lawsuit against the Del Webb Corporation claiming they had been misled. After reviewing the five-page disclosure statement signed by each of the residents when they purchased their homes, a Superior Court judge held that there was no misrepresentation and ruled in favor of the company.

Other residents viewed Grandview Terrace as a welcome addition to the community and began calling to inquire about the units long before construction was started. A sales office with a model unit was constructed on a corner of the site and 65% of the units were sold before construction began. The units sold initially for between \$85,000 and \$250,000, under three distinct purchase options. Eighteen floor plan variations were available, ranging in size from 850 to 2,230-sq. ft.

The \$50-million Grandview Terrace opened to residents in



Grandview Terrace offered residents a new choice of condominium living in a six-story structure complete with many fine amenities. All 288 units were sold within two years of opening, and the mortgage was burned at the end of the first year. *Photo courtesy of Grandview Terrace*

June 1997. As part of its independent-living features, residents have their choice of five main dining rooms, two private dining rooms, and a snack bar and grill. Amenities include a grand ballroom, indoor heated pool and spa, exercise gym, indoor padded walking track, auditorium, dance floor, library, beauty/barbershop, arts and crafts room, computer club, woodworking shop, billiard room, card/activity room, health and wellness clinic, an activities program, full service bank, and overnight guest suites. Residents also pay dues and can use all the Rec Center facilities.

A survey of residents conducted in 2001 demonstrated Grandview Terrace's appeal to long-time residents of the community. It found that 54% of Grandview Terrace's residents have lived in Sun City West for more than 15 years. Almost half the residents are in the 80-85 age group and another quarter are over 85.

Completion of the City Center

Denny Ryerson, president and CEO of The Ryerson Company recalls being invited by Chuck Roach to attend a "neighborhood meeting" to listen to residents' suggestions for the vacant land in the city center. DEVCO had agreed to build homes on just 30 of the acres, leaving 20 acres for other uses. Mr. Ryerson pulled up to the R. H. Johnson Social Hall to find it overflowing with people. While he had come to listen, he soon found himself answering questions on how he would develop the land. "Why can't we have a facility like the Heritage Palmeras in Sun City?" asked one resident. Heritage Palmeras was a Ryerson project.

The strong outpouring of interest convinced The Ryerson Company and Ken Meade Realty to purchase the 20 acres from DEVCO, and to begin planning a continuum of care campus. Sun Healthcare Group of Albuquerque (no relation to the local Sun Health) approached Ryerson with an offer to purchase four acres along Sandridge Drive south of the post office. They were prepared to proceed immediately with an assisted living facility. Since this fit perfectly with the strong interest that had been expressed by the community, the parcel was sold. The 97-unit Sun Bridge opened in May 1998. (It was sold to Epoch Senior Living, Inc. in December 1999 and the name was changed to Epoch Assisted Living.)

When Ryerson announced plans for a 228-unit luxury apartment complex, a small group of residents contested the "buy-in fee" that had been negotiated with the Recreation Centers. The dissidents

claimed that the \$2,500 per unit fee was 40% less than the average city-wide value per household. That assessment did not take into account that the residents of Heritage Traditions would tend to be older, use the recreation centers less, but at the same time, would be contributing almost twice the annual fee paid by homeowners. This is a result of Heritage Traditions being a rental property. Each year, the property owner (Ryerson), pays an amount equal to the Recreation Center's annual fee times the number of renters. In addition, each individual pays the Recreation Center's annual fee charged to renters. Once this was made clear, the opposition died down and the community welcomed its newest neighbor.

The first residents moved into Heritage Traditions in December 2000. The Ryerson Company went on to plan a 38-unit, assisted-living facility on the remaining five acres. Preliminary plans are for construction to begin in 2003.



Heritage Traditions offered residents the choice of a luxury apartment complex with many on-site amenities. The community's response was strong with more than half of the 228 units rented prior to the start of construction. *Photo courtesy of Heritage Traditions*

The Final Chapter

As part of the 1994 agreement regarding filling in the city's center, DEVCO agreed not to seek residential rezoning of any of its other commercially zoned property in Sun City West. By mutual consent, the master agreement with the community was amended to set a 17,340 home limit for Sun City West. In just two short years, Sun City West would be "built out" and the Del Webb Corporation would turn its attention to its next "Sun City" — Sun City Grand.

Chapter 9

Resort-Class Recreational Facilities

For many, retirement marks the beginning of a new lifestyle, with time to engage in sports, hobbies and other activities for which there wasn't enough time earlier. Sun City became a national showcase for active adult living, and the Del Webb Corporation sought to expand on this success with the new Sun City West.

To John Meeker, president of DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company), the new community had to be larger with facilities unmatched elsewhere. At its core, an "Emerald Valley" would be the focal point as what he called the "largest golf course development project in Arizona history" got under way. Adjacent to it would be a recreation center, "the largest private facility for recreational and creative activities in Arizona."

The central area would also feature a 7,000-seat center for the performing arts, "Arizona's [and possibly the world's] largest indoor theater...all on one level." Plans also called for a Dining and Social Club overlooking the golf course, and the Sun City West Vacation Headquarters with restaurant and lounge. This would serve as the social center until the R. H. Johnson complex opened.

Construction of the Hillcrest Golf Course began in 1977 and was soon followed by work on the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center, the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts and the Crestview Vacation Headquarters. The earlier-than-expected sell-out of Sun City, along with the fast pace of home sales for the new community, meant that these would not be completed before the first homes were built and occupied.



By June 1978, the outlines of future streets and the 20-acre lake at the center of the Hillcrest Golf Course are prominent as Sun City West started to take shape. *February 1979 SCW Newsletter*

Resort-Style Amenities on a Grand Scale

Named for the then president of the Del Webb Corporation, the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center spreads over 48 acres, and consists of six activity areas with 118,000-sq. ft. under roof. It opened over a period of several months beginning in March 1979. The Sports Pavilion originally offered 24 lanes of bowling, a 25-table pool and billiard hall, 10 indoor shuffleboard courts, locker room and snack bar. A Pool/Fitness Center offered an Olympic-size pool with diving area, large cabana area, therapy pools and state-of-the-art exercise equipment.

The Arts and Crafts Complex provided seven workshops, plus a lecture hall, and a shop to sell residents' handicrafts. Nearby was the Social Hall, an 1,100-seat ballroom that could be divided into two halls, and an adjoining kitchen.



Designed in Spanish Colonial Style, the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center set the architectural standard for the first public buildings. According to Webb brochures, it was the largest private complex for recreational sports, physical conditioning, and arts and crafts in the Southwest. *Sun City West sales brochure R12-0*

Another activity center offered bocce, badminton, volleyball, mini-golf and croquet outdoors, and handball, table tennis and a game room indoors. This building was also the first location of the woodworking shop. Across the parking lot were 18 tennis courts, seven platform tennis courts, lawn bowling, a quarter-mile exercise track and a “challenging obstacle course.” The tennis courts were recessed eight feet for aesthetic reasons. Overall, the center offered parking for 1,763 vehicles.

Over the years, numerous changes have occurred at the R. H. Johnson Center. Croquet and badminton gave way to additional bocce courts. Woodworking moved to its own building at the new Kuentz Center. During the summer of 1985, the Social Hall underwent expansion, adding a stage, four backstage dressing rooms, and increasing seating capacity to 1,300.

The year 1992 saw improvements made at all the recreation centers as part of a new Master Agreement with the Del Webb Corporation regarding the expansion area. Six bowling lanes were added to the R. H. Johnson Sports Pavilion, along with six additional pool tables. The number of shuffleboard courts was reduced from 10 to five, and the manager's office and locker rooms were relocated. Outside, four bocce courts were added in the area previously used for badminton. Another 1,300-sq. ft. were added to the Arts and Crafts Complex, giving the Silvercraft Club much needed space.

Later in the 1990s, a significant addition was made to the Administration Building, and its offices were remodeled. A unified, "hub and spoke" telephone system was added, with a central switchboard that integrated the separate phone lines existing at each recreational center and golf course. Now, all facilities share the same basic exchange (544), and calls within the system may be connected by dialing just the last four digits.

The Importance of Golf as a Sales Tool

John Meeker realized that hosting Senior and Ladies Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournaments would give the new community national exposure. As a result, Hillcrest was laid out as a 6,960-yard course, playing to par 72 for men, 75 for women. More than 2.4 million cubic yards of earth were moved to create a rolling valley, lagoons, brooks and bunkers. Water would come into play on 14 holes, while 78 sand traps filled with white marble sand added to the challenge. The new course opened on Feb. 17, 1979, and according to the DEVCO newsletter was called "one of the three most challenging courses in Arizona."



Arizona Senator Dennis DeConcini (left) and John Meeker (right) present Jan Stephenson with a check after she won the first golf tournament played at the new Hillcrest Golf Course. *March 1980 LPGA Edition of SCW Newsletter*

One year later, the course hosted its first Ladies PGA tournament, a “\$100,000 Classic” won by Jan Stephenson. Fifty thousand people were on hand during the tourney’s five days to watch the return of women’s professional golf to the Phoenix area. The LPGA returned in 1981 and 1982.

In April 1984, Hillcrest hosted the \$200,000 Senior PGA Roundup, attracting Arnold Palmer, Sam Snead, Julius Boros, Billy Casper and many other golfing greats. A 36-hole pro-am tournament gave 200 amateurs the chance to play alongside the pros. Billy Casper won the 54-hole Roundup with a 14 under par score of 202.



How different Pebblebrook Golf Course looked at the opening of the front nine in September 1979! Residents were invited to play one free, 18-hole round the first two weeks that the course was open (which evidently meant playing the front nine twice). The front nine measured 3,246 yards from the championship tees and played to a par 36. *September 1979 SCW Activities Calendar*

As expected, each of the tournaments drew huge crowds. National coverage brought Sun City West to the attention of millions more across the country. The Webb organization underwrote the expenses of these tournaments in the early

years, and after they were established, turned them into benefits for Boswell Memorial Hospital in Sun City. The last Senior PGA tournament was held at Hillcrest in 1988, moving to the Pointe Resorts the following year.

First Resident-Only Course Opens in 1979

Six more courses were planned for Sun City West, and work had begun on two as Hillcrest was under construction. Pebblebrook opened for play in September 1979 with Stardust, an executive-length course, following in November 1980. Nine holes opened at Briarwood in 1982 and were available to residents until the club became a private club in 1985. Grandview, the longest course, opened in December 1984.

Billy Casper was involved in the design of two regulation courses, Trail Ridge and Deer Valley (which he co-designed with Greg Nash), and one executive course, Desert Trails. Deer Valley opened for play in January 1994, and Desert Trails in February 1995.

Contests were held to name several of the courses. In 1986, nearly 6,000 entries were received to name the new course north of Meeker Boulevard. Two hundred submitted the winning name: Echo Mesa. A drawing resulted in Dennis Rehder winning a Rainbow Explorer Package for two to beautiful Lake Powell. In 1993, 22 people submitted the winning name for the newest regulation course: Deer Valley Golf Course. Jean Holting's name was drawn as the winner and she won a round of golf for four at Hillcrest.

Play It Again

In 1983, residents Andy Van Boeyen and Amos Childers were hired as ball pickers at Pebblebrook. It was their job to pick up all the range balls several days a week. Every so often, a diver was hired to remove balls from the ponds. Burlap bags full of recovered balls then had to be cleaned and sorted into culls and keepers. The latter were striped with a hand- and foot-operated machine, one ball at a time. Producing a uniform stripe required excellent hand, eye and foot coordination, and the quality of the striping varied widely. But it is significant to note that in the early days of Sun City West the range balls were homemade by Amos and Andy.

An Active Community Finds Time to Read

The library proved extremely popular with residents, and today is the Recreation Association's single most-used facility! Within a year of its opening in October 1979, it had 2,000 registered borrowers and a circulation of 300 items a day. At that time, the library housed 10,000 volumes provided by the Maricopa County Library District. Evelyn Cornish, the first librarian, and 50 volunteers prepared and shelved books for circulation. At that time, Mrs. Cornish and a janitor were the only paid library employees.

The Friends of the Library was started in 1979 and was chartered as a club by the Rec Centers. It also was recognized as a non-profit



The striking Spanish bell tower of the library is a Sun City West landmark. The bells in the tower are decorative with the sound being electronically generated. *September 1982 SCW Activities Calendar*

organization by the IRS, enabling all donations made to the Friends to be tax-deductible.

In 1992, DEVCO undertook a 2,000-sq. ft., \$140,000 expansion of the library. This added a new reading area, video library, a special area for visiting children and an expanded administration area.

For 15 years, the library was open to any resident of the surrounding area and received services from the County Library. By 1995, the population explosion in the

surrounding area created a demand for library services that would soon exceed the library's ability to respond. The Friends of the Library proposed limiting the facility to Sun City West residents. Since employee salaries and building upkeep were paid for by the Recreation Centers, the board agreed with their request, and non-resident memberships were cancelled as of June 30, 1995.

As a result, the library became private and no longer eligible for the reciprocal loan program offered by the Maricopa County Library District. The Friends of the Library provides the funds to purchase books, newspapers, magazines, video- and audiocassettes, and more. These funds are raised by the Friends through several activities, the most important of which is the annual Endowment Fund Drive. Income from this endowment, along with book sales, membership fees and other activities cover the \$70,000 needed yearly for library materials.

The Friends of the Library also sponsors the Thursday Night Movies as another fund-raiser. The movies were first held in the library on

Tuesday nights using a borrowed home projector, and quickly became a popular addition. As the number attending increased, the movies moved to the Lecture Hall, then to the Social Hall, and finally to Thursday nights at the Stardust Theatre. Since December 1979, residents have enjoyed movies of an earlier era.

Sun City resident Sam C. Litrenti created the bronze sculpture, "Lucky Strike," which sits in front of the library and has played a role in raising funds. People passing by toss coins into the prospector's pan, netting the library 25-30 cents on a good day!

Briarwood Country Club

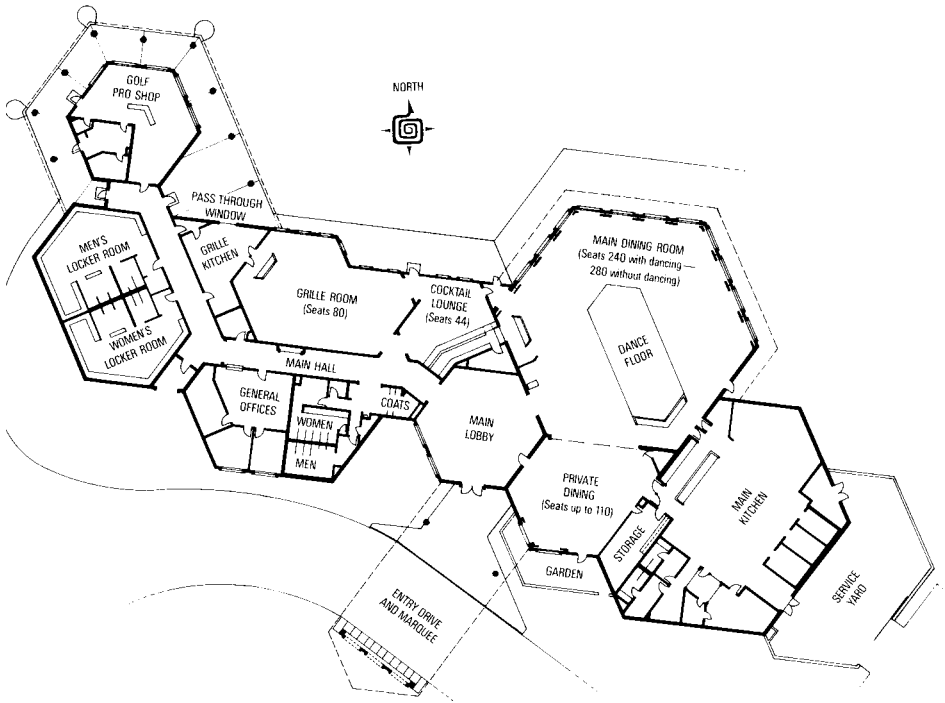
In 1981, DEVCO began construction of a private country club on 143 acres at 135th Avenue and Meeker Boulevard, partly to provide premium lots for larger houses. The back nine holes opened for public play Nov. 15, 1982, and construction started on the front nine soon after. Once the club reached 405 proprietary members, it was to become a private course.

DEVCO began taking reservations for proprietary memberships at \$9,990 for the first 100, \$12,900 for the second 100 and \$15,000 thereafter. Applications for proprietary members required a \$1,000 down payment, which was placed in an interest-bearing account. Social memberships were available for \$1,200.

Groundbreaking for the 8,700-sq. ft. clubhouse, pro shop, tennis courts and outdoor pool took place in April 1984. This coincided with the first Senior PGA Tournament at the Hillcrest Golf Course, and Sam Snead did the honors of turning the first shovelful of dirt at Briarwood.

In May 1985, Briarwood's elegant clubhouse opened to members. The \$4.2-million building housed a fine dining area with seating for 252, a 900-sq. ft. dance floor, lounge, patio, private dining areas, pro shop, grill area, locker rooms for men and women and general offices. The layout also included a swimming pool and tennis courts. At that time, Briarwood had 355 golfing memberships and 451 social members.

When home sales around the course were completed in 1985, DEVCO was ready to sell Briarwood to the club members. A group of them formed an advisory committee, met October 28, 1985, to elect officers, and began negotiations to purchase the club. Charlie Coulter was elected first president. Mr. Coulter remembers one unusual element of the negotiations involved attaching casters to the dining room



Original layout of the Briarwood Clubhouse with its many hexagonal shapes. Additions over the years have enlarged the building and a major renovation gave it a new interior in 2002. *1985 Briarwood brochure*

chairs for easier movement. The \$80,000 estimate, reduced to \$56,000, was subtracted from the purchase price, but after the sale closed on May 30, 1986, the new Board of Directors decided to use in-house labor. A crew of members sawed off two inches from each leg of 500 chairs and installed casters, saving the club thousands of dollars.

By Jan. 20, 1986, fees from proprietary and social members totaled \$4,800,000, more than enough to pay for the entire facility. Fifty proprietary memberships and 154 social memberships were still available. One small addition was made that year. The patio was enclosed in order to seat 75 additional diners, and became known as "Charlie's Folly."

Briarwood Country Club became more than just a golf, tennis and dining experience. Many social activities were added including bridge, dance instruction, water aerobics and fashion shows. Among the spe-

cial annual evening events were the President's Ball, a Crystal Ball, a Sweetheart Ball, and the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve Balls.

Renovation in 1993 further enlarged the casual dining room and updated the décor. The patio was enclosed in 2000 to gain additional space, and was paid for from donations with one member matching the \$50,000 collected. The latest million-dollar facelift in 2002 brought the club into the 21st century with luxurious appointments throughout.

Today, Briarwood remains the only private country club in Sun City West, and enjoys a reputation of excellence for a well-managed golf and dining/dancing experience.

Beardsley Park Center Opens June 3, 1985

A specially appointed board headed by resident Hogan Dunlevy worked with DEVCO for more than a year planning a second recreation center. Plans were formally announced to residents in early 1984. The \$5-million facility would include the largest pool in the Sun Cities and feature a unique "indoor-outdoor design" with large doors along one side to facilitate year-round use. A second building would contain craft rooms for stained glass, copper enameling, china painting, pottery and photography, two large meeting rooms and an acoustically designed Music Room. (The latter would be renovated in 1989 to provide more cardplaying space.) On the surrounding grounds would be a large, grassy picnic area with bandstand, a mini-golf course,



More than 7,000 Westers came out on June 3, 1985, to celebrate the official opening of the community's second recreation center: Beardsley Park. The gala event was sponsored by DEVCO and featured complimentary refreshments amid live entertainment provided by the Westernaires, the Nani Komohana Tutus, the Synchronettes, the Oak Street Parade Dixieland Band and the Musicians Club. *August 1985 SCW Newsletter*

horseshoe pits and a greenhouse.

Ground was broken for Beardsley Park on April 30, 1984. A contest had been held to name the center, and the winning entry was submitted by Irene Van Goethem. She and her husband, Bob, received a three-night stay at Del Webb's High Sierra Hotel in Lake Tahoe, Nev.

The grand opening on June 3, 1985, featured entertainment provided by local groups, refreshments and tours of the new facilities. More than 7,000 residents attended.

In 1994, the Recreation Centers foresaw increased use of facilities as a result of the community's expansion, and laid plans to ease overcrowding at Beardsley. It was decided to move the Men's Club to a separate building, and then expand the card rooms and space for the Clay Club, China Painting Club and Photography West's video facility. It was decided to proceed with improvements totaling \$475,000, and to take that money from the Asset Replacement Fund. This eliminated the need for a membership vote that the Rec Center Bylaws required for capital expenditures over \$500,000.

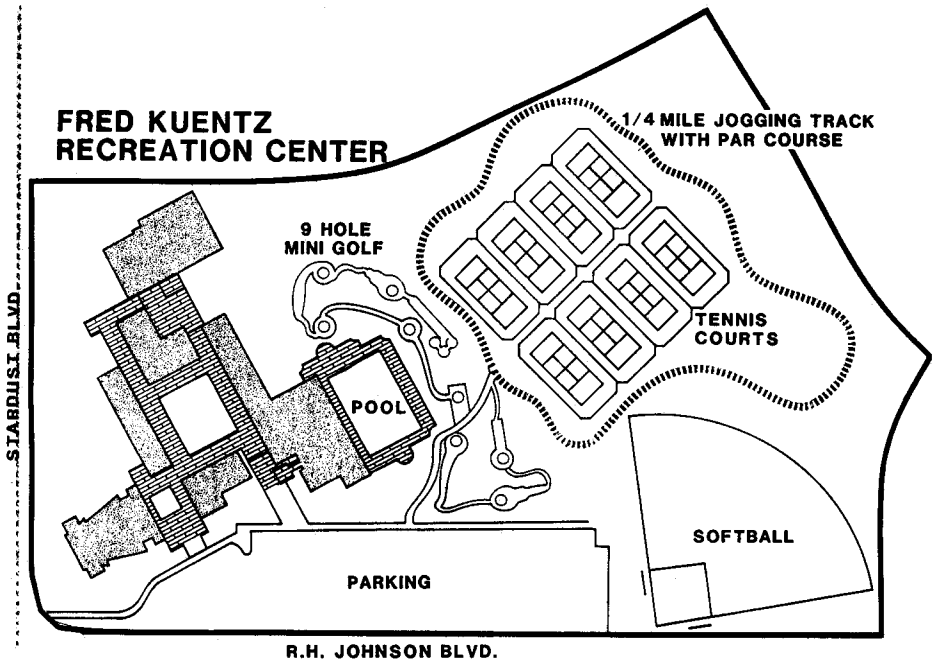
An ambitious, four-phase project to upgrade the Beardsley facility was announced in 2002. This \$1.6-million renovation would add 1,800-sq. ft. to the Arts & Crafts building, and a similar amount to the Aquatics building for a new fitness center.

Sun City West Master Plan Updated

In May 1985, Fred Kuentz, chairman of DEVCO, announced changes to the original master plan formulated in 1977. The 2,953 acres of residential land, 52% of the total project area, continued to comprise the greatest part of the community. A significant 2,259 acres was set aside for community facilities: recreation centers, golf courses, churches, utilities, fire stations and streets. To accommodate the strong demand for lots with a golf course view, a seventh golf course was added to the updated master plan. And, it was announced that a third recreation center would be built on a 14-acre site at R. H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards.

Kuentz Recreation Center Features Theater, New Activity Space

Plans for the third center were unveiled in July 1987. The \$5-million facility would be named for DEVCO's chairman, Fred Kuentz. A special New Recreation Center Advisory Board sifted through re-



The original 1987 plan for the Fred Kuentz Recreation Center included nine holes of mini-golf and eight tennis courts. *July 1987 SCW Activities Calendar*

quests coming from various groups and from open meetings with club members. The board was chaired by Jack O'Connor, president of the Rec Center Advisory Board.

Their initial plan, approved by DEVCO, included:

- ✧ Theater seating 300
- ✧ Women's club
- ✧ Workshops for art, weaving, woodworking and metalworking
- ✧ Five multi-purpose rooms
- ✧ Fitness center
- ✧ Therapy pool and 7,000-sq. ft. outdoor pool
- ✧ Nine-hole mini-golf course
- ✧ Eight tennis courts (four lighted)
- ✧ One-quarter mile jogging track
- ✧ Softball field

Ground was broken for the new facility in the fall of 1987. To keep the final price within the \$5.2-million budget, minor changes were made to the basic architectural plan and some items were deleted from the activity plan. Tennis courts were reduced from eight to six, and the mini-golf course was eliminated.

In preparation for the new theater, a Performing Arts Council was established in early 1988. It was made up of the presidents of the Westernaires, Theater West, Musicians Club, Rhythm Tappers, and the Organ and Keyboard Club. The Council's purpose was to oversee the operation and use of what would become the Stardust Theatre, administer scheduling and arbitrate any disputes between member organizations.

The center opened Feb. 10, 1989, and was busy from day one. It provided much needed space for clubs that were bursting at the seams. And, it offered the community a more intimate theater than the Sundome plus a Women's Club which grew to more than 800 members in its first year.

As a result of negotiations with the Del Webb Corporation regarding the expansion area in 1992, the Stardust Theatre received a larger backstage area, with additional room for storage and a larger dressing area.

Wood and Metal Workers Get Their Own Buildings

Originally, woodworking activities took place in an L-shaped area of the maintenance shop in the R. H. Johnson complex. It soon became apparent that there wasn't enough room for both activities. DEVCO proposed building a new, larger maintenance facility but decided that wouldn't be as attractive to the community as a separate woodworking shop.

In 1987, the Recreation Centers received a request for a charter for a metalworking club. Initial reaction was cool as there was no space. However, planning had been started for the new Kuentz Recreation Center, and it was decided to include a stand-alone facility to serve both wood and metal hobbyists. Two-thirds of the building would be for woodworking and the remainder for metalworking.

The new building opened in February 1989. The Metal Club's shiny new machines were lined up in a row, but lacked the accessories needed to make them useable. The club borrowed money from the Recreation Centers to complete the installation. To pay it off, club members made folding chair racks for several churches, bike racks, golf bag racks and

did repairs for Sun City West residents. In 1990, the popular mailbox extension was introduced and sales enabled the loan to be repaid.

By 1993, the Woodworking Club had more than 1,400 members and the Metal Club, 250. Members drew plans for a \$150,000 addition to the building, but DEVCO explained that on-site expansion wasn't possible. A larger building would require additional parking spaces, and there was no room for them. Instead, it was decided to move the Metal Club to a different location and devote the entire existing space to woodworking. Metal Club members were not happy with this decision and opposed moving.

The problem was resolved in an unexpected manner when a noticeable sag in the ceiling led to a full-scale inspection in October 1994. One roof truss had pulled apart, and others had cracked as the weight of the tile roof was too much for them. The roof rafters were deemed unsafe, and both clubs had to vacate the building while it was closed for repair. Inspection showed faults above five craft rooms, as well as above the covered common area in front of the Stardust Theatre.

While the roof was being rebuilt, construction began on a 4,000-sq. ft. building for the Metal Club on land along Camino del Sol donated by DEVCO. The club felt this wouldn't be large enough and petitioned the Rec Centers for additional space. Members were told they could have more room if they were willing to pay \$50/sq. ft. for it. The club paid \$15,000 for an additional 300-sq. ft.

Installation of the new roof took longer than expected, partially due to the decision to relocate the overloaded ceiling power and dust collection system to under the floor area. The Woodworking Club finally reopened 11 months later, in September 1995. The new Metal Club building opened in December. The club has since added storage space on the north side of the building, and in 2002, took over the space at the rear that was formerly used for Rec Centers vehicle repair.

Both clubs remain very popular. Metalworking has more than 550 members, and woodworking, 900.

Dogs Get Their "Recreation Center"

The original plan for the R. H. Johnson complex included space in a far corner for a special park for dogs and their owners. Overlooking Hillcrest Golf Course and adjacent to the tennis courts, the small park features a walking path around a small hill landscaped with trees and shrubbery, benches for the dog owners and sniffable faux fire hydrants

for the dogs. A fence had to be added to the tennis court wall to prevent dogs from jumping over and landing on the much lower court floor. While a popular gathering spot for pets and their owners, many residents remain unaware of this small oasis. The Doggie Park was upgraded in 2002.

By the end of 1989, homeowners were paying \$106 per person for the use of three recreation centers and library, and access to five golf courses.



Prince, a border collie owned by Hy Levy, checked his favorite pet park fire hydrant in this 1983 photo. *May 9, 1983 Daily News-Sun*

Expansion Area Adds Fourth Rec Center

In 1992, a new Master Agreement had been negotiated with the Del Webb Corporation. As part of acceptance of the development of an additional 1,320 acres, the Webb organization agreed to build a fourth recreation center, to make improvements to existing ones, and to add a \$6.5-million golf course. Most significantly, responsibility for the recreation facilities was turned over to a new Governing Board consisting of nine members elected by residents, and one appointed by Webb. The Webb representative retained veto power over any matters that could affect home sales, but this was never exercised. As part of the agreement, the Webb representative would leave the board when there were only 100 lots remaining to be sold.

Construction on the \$7.2-million Palm Ridge Recreation Center began in July 1993. The 54,000-sq. ft. center consists of two buildings. One emphasizes aquatics and fitness with two indoor pools, two spas, locker rooms, an upper deck walking track and the largest fitness room in the Sun Cities, outfitted with more than \$90,000 worth of sports equipment.

The second building features social and club activities. Its 11,000-sq. ft. Summit Ballroom is comparable to the one at the R. H. Johnson Center, with a wood floor and movable dividers. The hall also con-

tains a stage and two kitchens. Elsewhere in the building, workspace was provided for the Stained Glass Club and Computers West. A dance studio and two multi-purpose rooms round out the facility.

Outdoors are six lighted tennis courts. An outdoor pool with a sun deck and spa is located between the two buildings.

Construction was completed on May 27, 1994. A community party marked the opening with the Trinidad Calypso Band at poolside, the Contrasts Dance Band in the ballroom, performances by the Ballet Club and the Rhythm Tappers, and tables loaded with refreshments.



The 1994 grand opening of the Palm Ridge Center featured entertainment by a calypso band, the Ballet Club, Rhythm Tappers and a dance band. Groucho Marx look-alike Bryson Sherrill greeted those coming to the celebration. *June 1-7, 1994 Sun Cities Independent*

Men's Social Club Expands

In early 1980, a list of 101 men's names was submitted along with an application for a club charter. On May 7, 1980, a charter was granted for the Hillcrest Men's Club. The only space available was the meeting room in the Sports Pavilion and the new club could use it four days a week. In the early days, straight stud and draw poker were the only games played.

In the fall of 1983, the club learned that a new recreation center (Beardsley) was being planned, and petitioned for space for their activities. Subsequently, the plan for Beardsley Park allocated 2,200-sq. ft. for a card-playing area, kitchen and lounge. Members moved into their new club quarters there on May 15, 1985.

In March 1988, the club changed to its present name: Sun City West Men's Club. Membership increased each year and by 1992, the

club had more than 450 members. The space was proving too small, and the Rec Centers Board was petitioned for a larger area. One proposal was moving the back wall of the clubroom out 20 feet, giving the club an additional 1,000-sq. ft. However, in evaluating the needs of other clubs, the Rec Centers Board proposed expanding Card Rooms 1 and 2, resulting in the Men's Club only receiving 200 additional sq. ft. – and having to give up its kitchen and lounge. Members rejected that plan as totally inadequate.

A year passed as the Rec Centers Board looked at alternatives. In April 1994, members learned that the club would be given a new meeting room in the garden area at Beardsley Park, giving them a total of 3,600-sq. ft. But as plans progressed for changes at Beardsley, it was decided to move the Men's Club to a new building between the library and the walking track near the R.H. Johnson Center.

The new facility was opened to members on May 15, 1995. At the time, the club had 544 members. The new building and its prominent location attracted more men, and membership climbed rapidly to its peak of 722 by year's end.

Buyer Sought for Hillcrest

With Sun City West nearing completion, Del Webb Corporation announced in 1995 that it planned to sell the Hillcrest Golf Course. The Recreation Centers was given the first opportunity to submit a proposal, and appeared to have an inside track on the purchase.

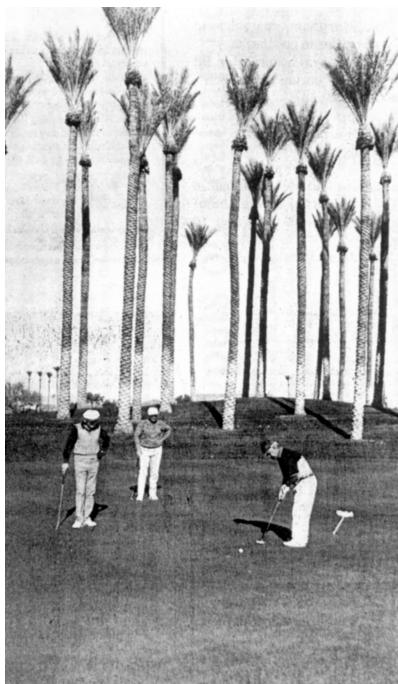
Other offers followed. Paul and Wilda Roach, parents of Webb's Sun City West General Manager Chuck Roach, gathered residents interested in purchasing the course and developing it as a private club. They envisioned 400 members paying an initial fee of \$22,000-25,000 and monthly dues of \$270. This would cover the expected \$6-million cost of the course, plus provide a new clubhouse. The group had contacted the Del Webb Corporation about purchasing the model home center for a clubhouse, but was told it would be demolished when the company left the community. Homes later were built on the site.

Webb officials gave the Recreation Centers time to develop a proposal and to submit it to the residents. That plan called for a \$200 per house assessment to finance the purchase of the golf course. Ballots were mailed to each residence in May 1996. The vote was 2-to-1 against the purchase with more than 21,000 votes being cast. Residents felt that seven courses were enough. And, while all homeowners would pay the special charge, only 25% of the residents golfed.

The change in ownership of Hillcrest faced other controversy, as there were those who believed that DEVCO had promised to give the course to the residents. The source for this rumor appears to be a September 1979 meeting of PORA members. DEVCO President Meeker told attendees that that ten years hence they would be given the opportunity to decide whether Hillcrest should be made a private club or turned over to Sun City West Rec Centers. People later implied that the course would be a gift from DEVCO, but Meeker's remarks did not specifically indicate that, and were off-the-cuff comments intended to assure residents that they would have a say in the final disposition of the course.

Louie Coor, a DEVCO sales associate, remembers being cautioned time and again in sales meetings that sales personnel were not to state, or imply, that Hillcrest would be given to the community. If asked, they were to reply that the disposition of the course hadn't been determined, and would be resolved at a later date.

In September 1996, Del Webb Corporation announced that Jacobs Golf Group of Scottsdale would buy Hillcrest. The new owners said they would keep the Hillcrest name, and did not intend to make any drastic changes. It would remain a public course.



The \$6.5-million Deer Valley Golf Course opened in January 1994. The 6,564-yard course was designed by Senior PGA Pro Billy Casper and Phoenix golf course architect Greg Nash to have a "Palm Springs" feel to it. More than 1,500 trees and 46,000 shrubs grace its fairways. *Jan. 12-18, 1994 Sun Cities Independent*

The Added Value of Golf

The number and variety of golf courses help set Sun City West apart from other retirement communities. Only Sun City and Sun City West can offer golfers a resort-like community with the opportunity to play a different course each day of the week.

More importantly, the courses offer welcome green spaces in a desert community, and are appreciated by golfers and non-golfers alike. While fees are set so that the courses “pay their own way,” their presence helps maintain strong property values for all residents.



Nine range horses find the grass is greener on the Desert Trails Golf Course in January 2002. Golfers, neighbors and the Posse joined the horses' owner in rounding them up and sending them back out Deer Valley Drive from whence they came. *Photo courtesy Randy Altenhoff*

Chapter 10

The Nation's Largest Single-Floor Theater



The Sundome Center for the Performing Arts opened in 1980 with seating for 7,169. It was acclaimed by audiences and performers alike for its marvelous lighting and acoustics. *1981 Sundome schedule*

The Sundome Center for the Performing Arts was another result of John Meeker's desire to surpass previous accomplishments. The Sun Bowl in Sun City had drawn crowds of thousands who brought lawn chairs to enjoy the likes of Bob Hope, Rosemary Clooney and Lawrence Welk. Meeker wanted to offer similar entertainment in the new community, but indoors and in air-conditioned comfort. This would also draw theater groups that couldn't perform outdoors.

He also wanted a major regional theater, drawing not only from the 70,000 residents of the then-planned Sun City West, but from the surrounding area as well. Since most of the attendees would be seniors, Meeker wanted to make it as easy as possible for them to access seating. Consequently, plans were laid for an auditorium that would comfortably seat nearly 7,000 on a single floor. It would be the largest, single-floor auditorium in the U.S.!

A Major Construction Challenge

The 108,000-sq. ft. area of the Sundome floor is large enough to accommodate two football fields laid side-by-side. Creating such a huge free-span space was a taxing challenge for DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) personnel who designed and built the structure.



Panoramic view of the Sundome's interior taken during construction. The floor slopes 17 feet in the 225-foot distance from the rear wall to the front of the stage. The interior is four stories high at its greatest height and easily dwarfs the pickup truck to the right of the stage. *April 1980 SCW Newsletter and Sundome folder*

Early on, one architect recommended an air-supported structure. Webb representatives visited an existing air-lock structure in Iowa and found that the pressure differential almost knocked down people upon entering or leaving. Clearly, this would not be appropriate for a city of seniors. Meeker doubled the budget to enable a proper facility to be built.

Once designed, the construction complexities were immense. Realizing the need for experienced construction personnel, DEVCO hired Jack McAllister as construction superintendent. He had worked on Angels Stadium in Anaheim, Calif. and airport terminals at the Kansas City International Airport.

One of the challenges was creating a floor that sloped gradually for the 225 feet from the back to the stage. In that distance, it would slope down a full 17 feet. Scaffolding had to be erected on this sloping floor to enable workers to construct the roof and ceiling. Since the ceiling height is equivalent to a four-story building, a record amount of scaffolding was required.

The stage measures 25 feet high, 55 feet wide and is 50 feet deep. A large dance floor was built in front of the stage, with space for 500 couples to dance to the music of the “Big Bands” that were popular at the time. Now this space is used for additional seating, serves as the orchestra pit for Broadway shows or as open space for the choir, musicians and camera people associated with the more than 40 graduations held here annually.



Four huge fabricated trusses, including two 250 feet in length and 19 feet thick at the center, support the steel deck and roofing at the Sundome. Positioning of the main trusses, each weighing in excess of 115,000 pounds, required two cranes and precise placement on a still day. To allow for expansion and contraction, the trusses rested on end supports that permitted movement. Despite their immense weight, this design feature would result in an unexpected problem years later. *Sun City West sales brochure 0153*

Assuring the Audience's Comfort and Enjoyment

No detail was too small for John Meeker's involvement. It was he who selected the chairs, seeking the type generally found in higher-priced sections of major theaters. He sat in each chair sent for consideration, and personally selected the winner. "We didn't buy the cheapest chairs," he said. "We bought the seats that were most comfortable." And, he saw to it that a full 40 inches existed between rows for comfort and ease of access.

A highly sophisticated sound system was installed to provide a "front row, center seat" experience for everyone in the theater. It has been regularly upgraded to remain "state of the art." Suspended, reflective "sound

clouds" above the front of the stage enhance the music of orchestras and choral groups. More than two decades later, the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts is recognized as having the finest acoustics of any large theater in the world.

Even the hearing-impaired have not been overlooked. An infrared hearing assist system features a series of emitters above the proscenium arch. These receive an audio signal and convert it to an infrared lightwave signal that can be picked up anywhere in the theater. Headsets are available at no charge in the lobby and allow the user to select the volume level that sounds best.

In 1997, another rigging grid was added to permit touring companies to mount their own lighting trusses and speakers. Many travel with their own equipment in order to assure the desired results regardless of the theater in which they perform. In that way, the audience hears the "original" production.



The Sundome offers two star and two chorus dressing rooms, equipped with make-up stations, showers and restroom facilities. The chorus dressing rooms have 20 make-up stations apiece. *Sundome folder*



Theater-goers entering the auditorium through the center portal pass beneath a 70-foot mural, "From Evolution Through Progress to Where?" Painted by Sun City artist Fred Kabica, the painting begins with the titanic struggle of the universe's creation shown in the above panels, and passes through the development of stars, planets and Planet Earth. It then depicts the progress of the Earth's people up to the near future. The canvas consists of ten panels, and took four years to complete. The mural was actually finished in 1974, and reserved for the new Sun City West facility. *Aug. 29, 1980 Daily News-Sun*

The Grand Opening

A crowd numbering in excess of 3,000 turned out for a gala sneak preview of the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts on Sept. 12, 1980. The cocktail party and open house were hosted by John Meeker and DEVCO officials. Guests toured the facility from top to bottom, including star dressing rooms. Most then settled in for an evening of dancing on the 6,000-sq. ft. dance floor.

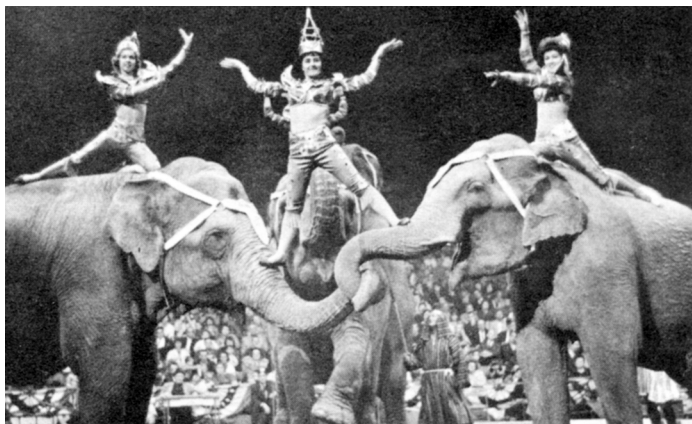
The official opening came the next night, Saturday, Sept. 13, at 8pm. A crowd had begun assembling in the Sundome courtyard two hours before showtime, waiting to get a glimpse of the new theater. When the doors opened, 5,639 concert-goers filed in, looking around in awe at the immense theater. After brief welcoming speeches by Webb officials and U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini, Lawrence Welk gave the downbeat to his traveling entourage. In the words of one attendee, "It was a Wunnerful!, Wunnerful! evening!"

Installation of sound and lighting equipment was completed just before show time. As a result, the technicians who installed the equipment were called on to operate it. This caused the union representing the Sundome sound and lighting personnel to place pickets outside the theater – the only blemish on an otherwise spectacular opening night.

Two Decades of Memorable Shows

The Sundome lived up to Meeker's expectations, providing a wide variety of entertainment and presenters.

Among the more unusual were circuses performed on stage and on trapezes high over the heads of the audience in 1982 and 1985.



The circus came to town for four action-packed performances in February 1982. Tigers, elephants, aerial acts, clowns, fire-eaters, sword-swallowers and more all made appearances inside the Sundome. Outside was a family side show with two huge tents, elephant rides, a petting menagerie and various other activities. *February 1982 SCW Activities Calendar*

One act that never got off the ground involved an indoor fireworks show in July 1980. A couple of test barrages were set off, activating every fire alarm system in the building!

Ex-President Gerald Ford addressed a Sundome audience in 1981, just six days after returning from the fu-

neral of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Security was extremely tight with the 5,006 attendees having to pass through metal detectors. German shepherds trained to detect handguns and gunpowder trotted through the aisles.

The Sun City Symphony Orchestra was playing to large crowds and sought to use the Sundome. Don Tuffs, Sundome's director of entertainment at that time, agreed to schedule them if they would play "Classical Music's Top 40 Hits" — music of Brahms, Strauss and other widely recognized composers. The orchestra agreed and quickly became extremely popular. As many as 5,500 season tickets were sold during the peak years, surpassing the sales of many large-city orchestras worldwide.

In 1983, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra scheduled 60 performances throughout the U.S. They were invited to the Sundome with the pro-

viso that they play Strauss pieces. “While 59 locations heard the same program, the Sundome featured An Evening With Strauss,” according to Don Tuffs.

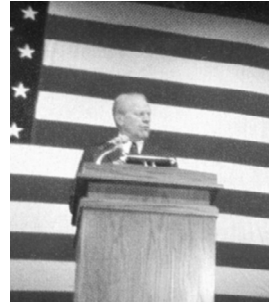
A list of famous persons appearing at the Sundome would include George Burns, Dolly Parton, Bill Cosby, Johnny Cash, The McGuire Sisters, Bob Dylan, Walter Cronkite, John Denver, Willie Nelson, Bob Hope, The Judds, Louis Rukeyser, Jim Nabors, Beverly Sills, Red Skelton, Reba McIntire, Andy Williams and many, many more. The live broadcast of National Public Radio’s “Prairie Home Companion” set the all-time attendance record in May 2000, with every seat sold, plus 50 standing-room-only tickets. Lowest attendance on record: 530 for Evo and Jemmy Bluestein. Only a few artists have been permitted to smoke on stage including George Burns, Bill Cosby and Alan King.

The perennial favorite is the November Sun City West Variety Show which benefits the Sun Health Foundation and through it, the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. With more than 200 performers and five performances, the Variety Show is easily the most challenging production of the year. Since its inception in 1981, the Variety Show has raised over \$1,000,000 for the Sun Health Foundation.

Sundome Center Sold for \$1

DEVCO management was concerned with the future of the Sundome once the company withdrew from the community. Don Tuffs, who had become the Sundome’s first general manager, proposed that the company transfer the Sundome to Arizona State University (ASU) because of the reputation of the school’s fine arts program. He believed the school not only had the expertise to operate the Sundome efficiently, but also could do some things that the Webb organization couldn’t.

Webb management was enthusiastic about the idea and approached ASU. At that time, ASU was in the midst of a battle for funding for ASU West. Many state legislators feared that ASU was a Tempe university and that funding for ASU West would be siphoned off to enhance programs in Tempe.



Gerald Ford is the only former president to have lectured at the Sundome. More than 5,000 people attended his 1981 lecture. *Sundome folder*

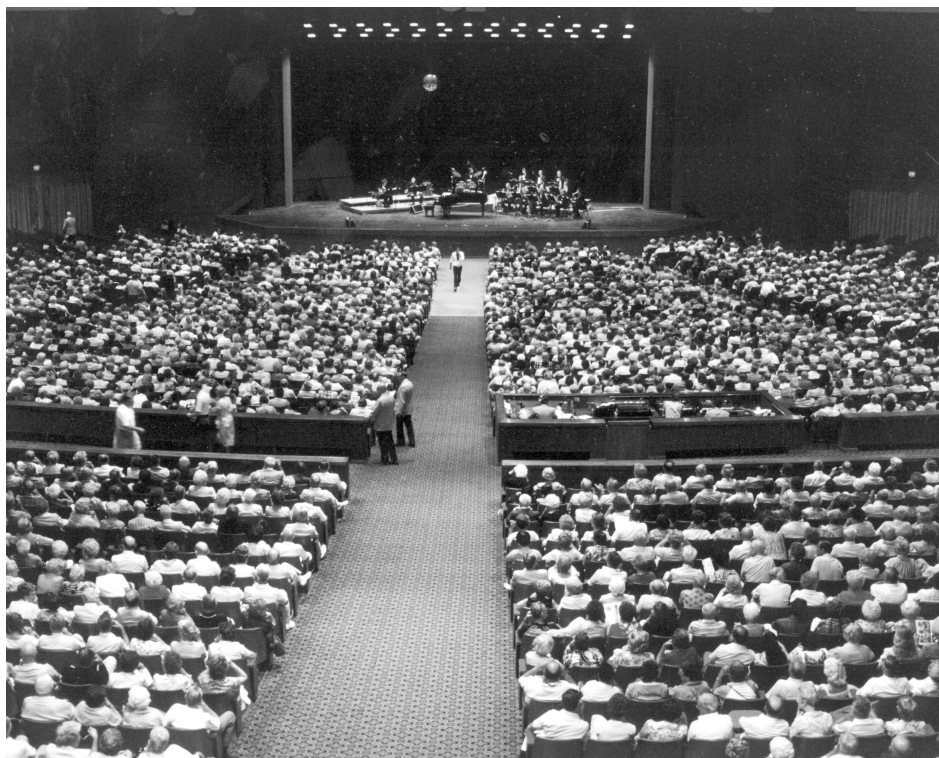


Fig. 10-8 Since its debut in 1980, the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts has received numerous awards for its innovative design and engineering concepts. It has been recognized for its barrier-free design, special wheelchair sections and its unique closed-circuit broadcasting system for the hearing impaired. As one of Arizona's premier entertainment showcases, the Sundome Center amply accommodates and enhances nearly every event – from musical productions to comedy to automobile auctions. It truly is “one of a kind.” *Sundome folder*

ASU officials recognized that accepting the Sundome would provide a tangible means of demonstrating their commitment to the entire Valley.

Financial benefits also prompted the university to consider the transfer in a positive light. If ASU accepted the Sundome, its \$12-million original cost could be counted toward the \$75-million goal of the university's centennial fund drive. And, if the Sundome belonged to the school, the center could be used to reduce celebrity booking costs by allowing a performer to appear at two locations in one Phoenix-area trip.

The Webb organization's gift carried two stipulations: Sundome ticket prices could be no higher than those charged at the Gammage Center for the Performing Arts on the ASU campus; and that if it ever became necessary to change the sound system, the original sound engineering firm would be retained to do the work. ASU agreed and the contract was signed in December 1984. The Sundome Center for the Performing Arts became university property for the price of one dollar.

SPAA Raises Funds to Support Programming

With the gift of the Sundome came the responsibility of reducing the center's average annual operating deficit of \$200,000. To allow ASU time to plan for this, DEVCO underwrote the annual loss until 1988.

ASU budgeted \$260,000 to subsidize the Sundome. A Sundome Performing Arts Association (SPAA) was formed to conduct annual fund drives that would add to ASU's contribution, and offset the deficits for the 1988-89 and 1989-90 seasons. The community's response to the change in ownership was positive and donations covered the deficit by the 1989-90 season.

However, all was not as rosy as originally projected. Many performers did not like the double-booking provision due to the Sundome's location. The auditorium had become so strongly identified with Sun City West that many outside the area felt they weren't welcome. And, it became apparent that tastes of the West Valley audience were different from those drawn to shows on the ASU campus in Tempe.

In 1991, the State legislature reduced the budget for ASU, forcing it to end its subsidy of the Sundome. The condition was serious as it forced ASU to break even on the Sundome, or close it. A \$300,000 fund drive for 1991-92 was launched by SPAA with a \$50,000 gift from DEVCO. Through the mid-1990s, SPAA was able to raise the necessary funds to cover the deficit. Then, in 1996, a tremendous windstorm roared though the area, lifted the domed roof like a giant airfoil, and dropped it down a foot off center. Fixing the damage cost \$500,000, and destroyed the delicate financial balance SPAA had been able to achieve.

It was also becoming apparent that the 15-year old facility needed a face-lift. As Broadway shows had gotten more elaborate, the stage area of the Sundome was no longer adequate. While its stage floor was larger than many theaters, it lacked the height, or fly space, needed

for the sets of many shows. Additional dressing rooms and restrooms were needed as well.

A preliminary study of the modernization needs came up with an estimate of \$5 million. The university was unable to commit funds of that magnitude, and was getting set for a \$400-million fund drive for the Tempe campus. ASU approved the Sundome fund drive with the proviso that it would have to be raised locally without help from major firms which would be the primary contacts for the ASU drive.

The challenge was accepted and SPAA, under co-direction of Birt Kellam and Don Heyl, set out to raise \$5 million. Four million dollars would be raised locally and ASU committed one million from ticket revenues. It took almost three years to do it, but pledges and gifts



Since 1993, The Madison has hosted an annual Gala Benefit Dinner to benefit the Sundome Performing Arts Association, raising more than \$100,000 in the process. At the tenth anniversary dinner in February 2002, Birt Kellam (left), president of SPAA, presented The Madison with a certificate of appreciation. Accepting were Mary and Mike Teigen, co-managers of The Madison. Looking on at right was John Bergh, SPAA board member and chairperson for the dinner. *Photo courtesy of Lu Urdany*

totaling \$5.4 million were in hand by December 1999. The community was excited about the potential for new shows, and accepted the fact that the Sundome would be dark for all of the 2001 season.

Then the shock hit! The preliminary estimates were far from the mark. As professional theater design firms looked at the plans, figures of \$20 million or more were cited. After much pruning, the lowest bid was \$13.5 million, and the project was cancelled.

It was decided to ask donors to redirect their gifts to an endowment fund. A portion of the earnings from this would be used short-term for needed improvements, and longer term, to assist in bringing major shows to the Sundome. There are many touring companies whose sets would fit on the stage and who could be enticed to come if they could be guaranteed a base gate. Trailers could be rented for additional dressing rooms as this was customary for many theaters.

The key to the success of this approach lay with the major donor who had offered a \$1.1-million challenge grant, contingent upon the fund drive being completed by December 1999, and construction starting early in 2000. Once this benefactor agreed to redirect funds to the endowment, the rest of the community followed suit. Nearly 95% allowed their gifts to be used for this purpose, and the Sundome management scrambled to schedule entertainers to light up an otherwise dark year.

Once funding was assured, several long-overdue improvements were undertaken. Twenty-year old carpeting was replaced. Existing restrooms were remodeled and new ones added, including several for family use. Acoustically transparent drape dividers were installed to reduce the apparent size of the theater for smaller events.

The future of ASU's Sundome Center for the Performing Arts is filled with challenges. But, as the surrounding area is built up, it comes closer to John Meeker's dream of a major, regional entertainment center.

Chapter 11

A Community of Many Faiths

The people moving to Sun City West brought with them their religious convictions and a strong desire to maintain their faith. Some met for worship in private homes while others attended services in Sun City. As their numbers grew, there was a growing interest in holding services locally. Recognizing this need, DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) had planned for church locations throughout the community, and provided space for the fledgling groups to worship initially.

Several Churches Had Roots in Sun City

At least three churches got their start in Sun City. The Baptist Church started meeting in the Alco Theater in Sun City, and moved to Home Federal Savings and Loan in Sun City West as their numbers grew.

In the fall of 1985, Fountain of Life Lutheran Church in Sun City accepted the challenge of starting a “daughter congregation” in Sun City West. The new group first met at the R. H. Johnson Center.

The Jewish community of Sun City authorized the organization of Beth Emeth Congregation in 1967. They held conservative services regularly at various Sun City recreation centers and private homes until a synagogue was completed in Sun City West in May 1987.

Architecture Tailored to the Desert

The places of worship throughout Sun City West offer a variety of southwestern designs with traces of Spanish and Mediterranean influence. Most are built around a court with covered walkways to provide relief from the hot sun. Since they are built in an adult com-

munity, there is an absence of nurseries and Sunday School classrooms for children.

Many feature towers that signal a place of worship in the flat desert landscape. Perhaps the most distinctive tower is found at Desert Palms Presbyterian on 135th Avenue and Stardust Boulevard. A tall, triangular tower is topped with a trinity of crosses sustaining a lighted globe that pierces the night sky.

Many congregations started small and established long-range building programs. Building around a central court provided flexibility in expanding to meet the growth of the fellowship. As congregations grew, it often became desirable to add a smaller chapel for funerals and prayer in a more intimate setting. Columbariums were added as residents wished to be interred close to their church family.



A Community of Many Faiths

Sun City West offers many choices of places to worship. Each has its own history of leadership and growth. A brief summary of each follows in approximate chronological order of their becoming established in Sun City West.

Taliesin Associated Architects, a subsidiary of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, designed the Desert Palms Presbyterian Church including this striking triangular tower. The illuminated globe is visible for great distances at night, held high by three crosses. *Photo courtesy Desert Palms Presbyterian Church*

The Catholic Community of Our Lady of Lourdes

The Reverend Vincent Nevulis was appointed the founder and first pastor for a Catholic Church for Sun City West. He rented a furnished home at 13331 Prospect Drive, and celebrated daily Mass on the din-

ing room table. It was also in this room that an election was held and the name of “Our Lady of Lourdes” was chosen for the new parish. A new rectory was established on March 10, 1980, on Marble Drive. Sunday Mass was celebrated at the R. H. Johnson Social Hall from 1979 to 1982.



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church was the first congregation to break ground for a building, according to the March 1981, Sun City West Activities Calendar. Ceremonies featured Retired Bishop Ernest Primeau, right, parishioners and Charles Burke, deacon. *March 1981 SCW Activities Calendar*

Madonna Hall with its meeting rooms, assembly area and kitchen was the first building constructed, and served as both church and hall after its opening on Aug. 14, 1981. The new church with a sanctuary seating 1,100 was completed in the fall of 1988. By then, the parish population had reached 1,600 households.

Parish growth continued as Sun City West grew and expanded. Another church named *Prince of Peace* was completed in November 1998. This Spanish Mission architecture building seats 1,500. Dedication took place in April 1999, along with open house tours for Sun City West and surrounding communities. By the end of 2001, the “one parish, two churches,” encompassed nearly 3,600 households.

Desert Garden United Church of Christ

This church held its first service on Dec. 2, 1979, in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall. Rev. Frederic B. James, Jr. was the founding pastor.

The congregation soon began planning its own church home, and on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 1983, held its first service in the new sanctuary at 18818 N. 128th Avenue. It was the first church completed in the new community.

The name “Desert Garden” is emphasized by the desert plants depicted in the stained glass windows of the sanctuary, and by the planting that surrounds the church. The chancel features a 12-foot tall cross made from 66 enamel-on-copper sections. It was fabricated by church member Jack Brady, assisted by his wife Jean – co-founders of the copper-enameling club in Sun City West.

A fellowship hall and columbarium were added in November 1990, and a music/multi-purpose building was completed in 2001.

While meeting the space needs of their own congregation, the church also made a commitment at its 20th anniversary to raise \$100,000 for new churches in the United Church of Christ (UCC) Southwest Conference. The newly formed Surprise UCC church was a direct recipient of this pledge that was met in 2001.

First Baptist Church of Sun City West

“Why don’t we have our own Southern Baptist Church in Sun City West?” Lois Yoshioka wrote in a letter to the editor of the Daily News-Sun in July 1978, shortly after groundbreaking of the new community. Two years later her question was answered when the popular North Phoenix Baptist Church expressed interest in sponsoring the mission.

In the meantime, the letter spawned a response from Pastor C. Melvin Rathael, associate pastor of Sun City Baptist Church, who wrote to the Del Webb Corporation requesting a church site for the First Baptist Church of Sun City West. By Easter Sunday, 1980, Pastor Rathael was chosen leader, the Alco Theater in Sun City was rented, and Lois Yoshioka was one of the first members of the 92-person congregation. In July, the group moved to the Home Federal Savings and Loan Building in Sun City West, and then to a Western Savings meeting room in 1981.

Sun City West was five years old on Feb. 13, 1983, when ground was broken for the Sun City West Baptist Chapel. The first worship services were held on Christmas Day, 1983, in the nearly-completed 9,240-sq. ft. building at 17419 Conquistador Drive.

During the next year, the Baptists opened their church to the United Methodists for three months while the R. H. Johnson Social Hall was



More than 5,000 people attended the first area-wide interfaith Thanksgiving Day service at the Sundome Performing Arts Center in 1983. This became an annual event with leaders of many faiths participating in the service. Offerings were designated for the work of Interfaith Services. *January 1984 SCW Activities Calendar*

being remodeled, and shared their facilities with the Beth Emeth Congregation while its members raised funds for a synagogue.

The Sun City West Baptist Chapel changed its name to Sun City West Baptist Church in 1984, and again changed to First Baptist Church of Sun City West in 1988. Determined to keep the traditional family feeling of the congregation by keeping one worship service, the congregation began construction of a Christian Life Center in November 1991. This doubled the size of the facility and the sanctuary. The new addition allowed room for approximately 400 in worship, 300 for Bible Study classes and 300 for dining.

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church

The United Methodists were one of the first church groups to request land from DEVCO. Rev. Leslie J. Ross, senior pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Sun City made the request in 1977, many months before the official announcement of the new community was released.

The first worship service was held in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall, Dec. 2, 1979. Nearly 200 attended and 53 became members. Rev. Byron Haines was appointed as the first pastor.

Initially, DEVCO offered the Methodists a tract of land along 128th Avenue. Based on the estimated final population of the community, it was felt to be too small and was turned down. Eventually, an eight-acre tract of land was offered along Meeker Boulevard, and was purchased in December 1982. The first service in the new sanctuary was held Dec. 22, 1985. A large Social Hall was added in 1992, and a chapel in 2002.

Church of the Advent Episcopal

A group of ten people began meeting in a home in 1979 and were authorized to form a Sun City West congregation by the Episcopal Bishop of Arizona. The Rev. Henry Goetz was appointed as the first priest. The group became part of the Interim Chapel that met in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall during 1979. Later that year, it began to hold its own separate service in the R. H. Johnson Lecture Hall, where members met for several years.

In October 1981, the Church of the Advent had the distinction of performing Sun City West's first baptism, according to a photo in the *Daily News-Sun*.

In 1985, construction of the present church at 18150 Spanish Garden Drive was completed. Desert landscaping complements the mission-style architecture. The complex includes All Souls Chapel, an outdoor chapel and columbarium where services are held on All Saints Day.

Desert Palms Presbyterian Church

A group of 66 persons met at R. H. Johnson Social Hall on Dec. 1, 1979, under the guidance of Dr. Paul Calhoun, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Sun City, for the first service of the "Presbyterian Fellowship Group of Sun City West."

The first service by the organizing pastor, Arthur Dahlberg, was May 31, 1980. In October 1980, a vote was taken regarding a new name, and the result was Desert Palms United Presbyterian Church. In March 1985, the "United" was dropped from the name. The congregation continued meeting at the R. H. Johnson Center for six years.

Property was obtained for a new church at 135th Avenue and Stardust Drive. Taliesin Associated Architects, a subsidiary of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in Scottsdale, was retained to design the new building. On Nov. 16, 1986, the congregation met to worship for the first time in its new church home. Pews seating 500 were arranged so that no one was more than 50 feet from the pulpit.

As the congregation grew, more space was needed. A social hall, chapel and administrative offices were added. In 2001, an additional 7,700-sq ft. were built. Today, the distinctive illuminated, triangular tower continues to provide a "beacon in the desert."

Lord of Life Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church established a mission in Sun City West in 1979, and this small group of Lutherans also held worship services at the R. H. Johnson Lecture Hall. In November 1981, the church was officially organized with 160 members. The Rev. Charles Ruby was the first pastor.

By 1984, the congregation had expanded sufficiently to require the purchase of 4.6 acres at the corner of Meeker and R. H. Johnson boulevards. A structure seating 400 was dedicated in 1986. The name of the church is symbolized in the rose window at the front of the sanctuary. It depicts the figure of Christ, "The Lord of Life," radiating blessing and power.

Growth of the congregation led to the addition of a fellowship hall, administration building and columbarium in March 1992.

Beth Emeth Congregation

The roots of this congregation go back to 1964 when the Sun City Jewish community authorized the organization of Beth Emeth, meaning "House of Truth." Services were held in private homes and at various recreation centers over the years. Finally, a lot was purchased on Meeker Boulevard, and a synagogue opened for services in March 1987. The congregation was fortunate to have an artist member, Max Gimpel, who designed the temple, its stained glass windows and appointments.

The building complex at 13702 Meeker Blvd. includes a library, small chapel for daily services, sanctuary and Judaica gift shop. The building is rich in the symbolism of the Jewish faith. Two large tablets of the Ten Commandments and a Menorah, the oldest symbol of Judaism, are visible signs of the faith worshiping here. And, a Biblical Garden may be found in front of the building. The synagogue offers a Hebrew School for youngsters.

First Church of Christ, Scientist

In the early 1970s, the members of First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Sun City saw the need for another Christian Science Church. Two Sunday services were being held and the third phase of Sun City remained to be built. All church lots in Sun City were taken, but then plans for Sun City West were announced. In January 1979, a few

members of the church began holding services in a local Sun City bank's community room.

In November 1981, church services were moved to a bank community room in Sun City West. The group incorporated as a Christian Science Society, a branch of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Mass.

The present building at 14140 W. Meeker Boulevard hosted its first service on Sunday, Dec. 11, 1988. On April 12, 1989, this Society became First Church of Christ, Scientist, Sun City West, Ariz. Society churches are not dedicated until debt-free, and the Dedication Service was held Jan. 15, 1995.

The property houses a Christian Science Reading Room that is open to the public. It is also one of the few churches in the Sun Cities that provides a Sunday School for children up to the age of 20, and a child care room for children too young for Sunday School.

Covenant Presbyterian Church of America

The history of this church is traced to 19 Sun City founders and a Bible study in 1978. On Feb. 4, 1979, this group committed to form a mission church. In May 1979, the Presbyterian Church in America called the Rev. Donald R. Esty as the first pastor. Covenant was officially organized June 14, 1981.

While planning for its own building, Covenant held worship services in several locations: the lecture room of Western Savings Bank in Sun City, the R. H. Johnson Lecture Hall, the community room of Western Savings Bank in Sun City West, and a second time at R. H. Johnson. These moves spanned the period February 1979 to April 1987.

In December 1982, the corner lot at Aleppo and Spanish Garden drives was purchased. Building plans were approved by the congregation in April 1986, and the new church opened for worship on April 26, 1987. A new wing was completed in 1992 to house a fellowship hall, kitchen, church offices and classrooms.

Crown of Life Lutheran Church

This congregation was founded in March 1986 under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. R. A. St. Pierre. Members met in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall until their new building was opened for worship on Feb. 3, 1991. The congregation has purchased property on Bell Road in Surprise in order to construct a new worship center for the greater Surprise

community. Worship services were initiated there in the spring of 2002.

First Assembly of God – Sun City West

Founding Pastor Gordon H. Nelson helped this congregation begin on June 11, 1989. Members initially met in a building at 12805 W. Beardsley Road. Three years later, they purchased the former savings and loan building across the street and held the first service in it on November 22, 1992.

Stardust Bible Church

Founding members of this church first met in January 1990. Their first pastor was the Rev. Allen H. Herr, now pastor emeritus.

Initial meetings of the congregation were held in the R. H. Johnson Center. From there, members moved to a room in the Sun City West Community Center. In 1992, they acquired the Mera Bank Building on R. H. Johnson Boulevard. The teller counter initially served as the pulpit and the vault provided storage. The congregation worshiped there for several years before selling the building in 1998 in order to build a new church.

The congregation had invested nearly \$900,000 in the Baptist Foundation of Arizona and was among the many who suffered losses when the Foundation filed for bankruptcy reorganization. As a result, members postponed plans to build on the lot they had purchased in 1997 at the corner of Granite Valley Drive and R. H. Johnson Boulevard.

The congregation did not give up, but emerged strengthened from the ordeal. On Dec. 15, 2001, ground was finally broken for their new church home at 14811 R. H. Johnson Boulevard. Pastor Don Furrow conducted the first service in the new facility on June 9, 2002.

Sun City West Christian Church

The Rev. Robert Hansen, a retired chaplain, missionary and college professor, served as the founding pastor of this church that formed on Jan. 5, 1992. Until they could build their own church, its members met in the Sun City West Community Center.

Their new church home was opened for worship on June 1, 1997. Many members and friends donated funds for stained glass windows with an “I Am” motif. These were dedicated in December 1998. The

“Church That Stands Behind The Cross” is located at 20803 151st Ave. at R. H. Johnson Boulevard.

Palm West Community Church

This church started in 1995 with Pastor Dr. Bill Kearns. Members met in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall until their new church building was opened for worship in Spring, 1996. They celebrated the burning of the mortgage for their Hoover Hall on Oct. 29, 2000.

Sun City Friends Worship Group

This Quaker worship group came into being in 1981. Members met at the Western Bank Community Room in Sun City West, and at Menke's Community Center in Sun City. Their last meeting was held in 1998.

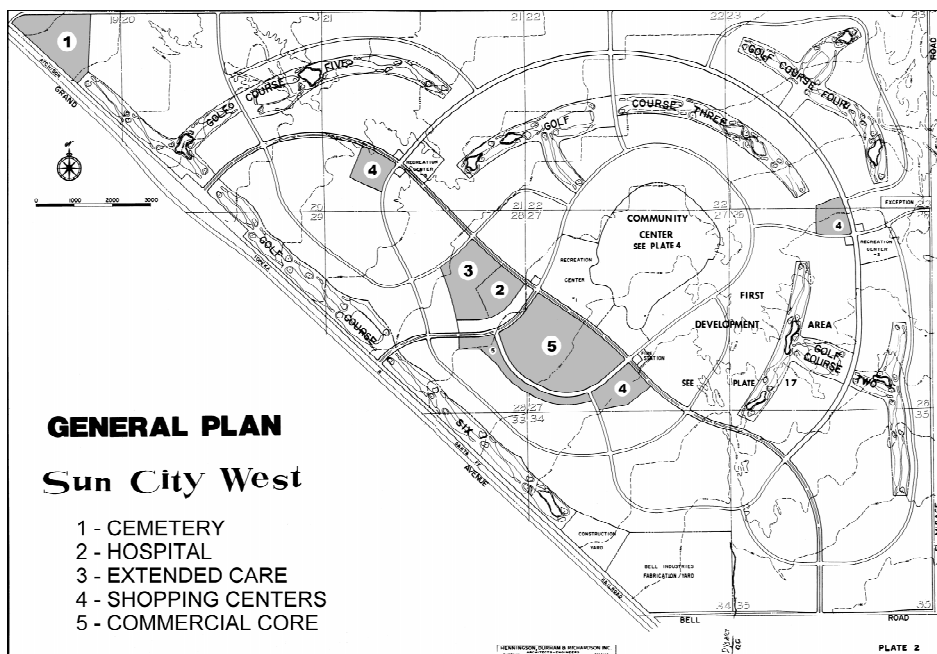
New Hope Fellowship

The newest church in Sun City West, New Hope Fellowship, started services in January 2001. The Rev. Bob Williams was the first pastor. The group plans to continue meeting in the Quail Room of the Sun City West Foundation Building until it is large enough to purchase property and build.

Chapter 12

Convenient, Local Businesses

As John Meeker, president of DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company), sketched in the broad strokes of the new community, he set aside a large central parcel for commercial development. He and others had watched the Metro Center develop in Phoenix, and thought a similar enclosed mall would be ideal for the new Sun City West. The area bounded by Sandridge Drive, Woodside Drive and 139th Av-



This early “General Plan” of Sun City West shows three areas reserved for shopping centers plus a commercial core. Note also the initial sites planned for the hospital, extended care and a cemetery.

enue (now New Traditions Road), was designated a “regional shopping center reserve.”

Stores offering food, furniture, clothing and medicines, however, would be needed immediately to support residents. As a result, “Shopping Center No. 1” was laid out on the southeast corner of Camino del Sol and R. H. Johnson Boulevard. Two other “shopping center reserves” were set aside for the future. One was west of R. H. Johnson Boulevard between Stardust Boulevard and 147th Drive; the other on the northwest corner of Beardsley Road and Crescent (now Stardust Boulevard).



Groundbreaking for Sun City West “Shopping Center No. 1” was conducted in early 1979 on the southeast corner of R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol. Safeway and Walgreens were among its first tenants and 18 other retail shops were anticipated for the center. *May 1979 SCW Activities Calendar*

Shopping Center Awaits Safeway and Walgreens

Construction of the Camino del Sol Center moved quickly with opening targeted for early April 1980. In February, however, Safeway officials surprised residents by announcing that they might not open their supermarket until sometime the following year. Their agreement with DEVCO called for 5,000 dwellings to be owned and occupied before they would open a store and those numbers hadn’t been reached.



The Camino del Sol Shopping Center stood complete and ready for business in April 1980. Note the changes that have taken place since: Safeway expanded to the east; a higher façade was added for a bank (now the location of Anderson Jewelers); and Bob's Variety added to the front of its store. *May 1980 SCW Newsletter)*

The first businesses to open, in March 1980, in the completed, but empty shopping center were Angela's Hair Studio, followed the next month by Today's Swim & Patio, and the Salad Bar Restaurant. Residential Lock & Key, Earl's Barber Shop, and Ford's World Travel followed in June; Hillcrest Florist in August; Kyle's Shoes, The Hair Barn and O'Shaughnessy's Fashions in September. Through it all, the Safeway and Walgreens stores remained vacant.

Waiting for Customers

Victor Tignini, owner of the Hair Barn, recalled how few customers there were when he opened his shop. Most of the stores in the Camino del Sol Center were empty, giving it a deserted appearance. Tignini even had his employees park their cars in front to make things look busier.

DEVCO agreed to a ten-percent share of his gross sales in lieu of rent until business picked up. The DEVCO representative was in his shop one day, telling him that the opening of the Safeway store would bring more traffic. As they were talking, a woman came into the Hair Barn. "See," whispered the DEVCO rep, "your luck is about to change." Tignini turned to the woman and asked, "May I help you?" "Yes," she replied, "May I use your bathroom?"

Finally, Safeway announced plans for a grand opening on Sunday, Sept. 14. The Walgreens Drug Store opened at the same time but held an official grand opening ceremony ten days later.

It would take nearly two years to fill the center. The last major store to open was Freed's Furniture in July 1982. About the same time, Consolidated Bank agreed to locate in the center if a vertical façade would be built over their entrance. Anderson Jewelers now occupies this store.

In 1983, merchants voted unanimously to rename the center Sundome Plaza in honor of the new performing arts center located nearby. They also felt it would remove any confusion with other Sun City area shopping centers. When the center reached 70% capacity, DEVCO sold it to private owners.

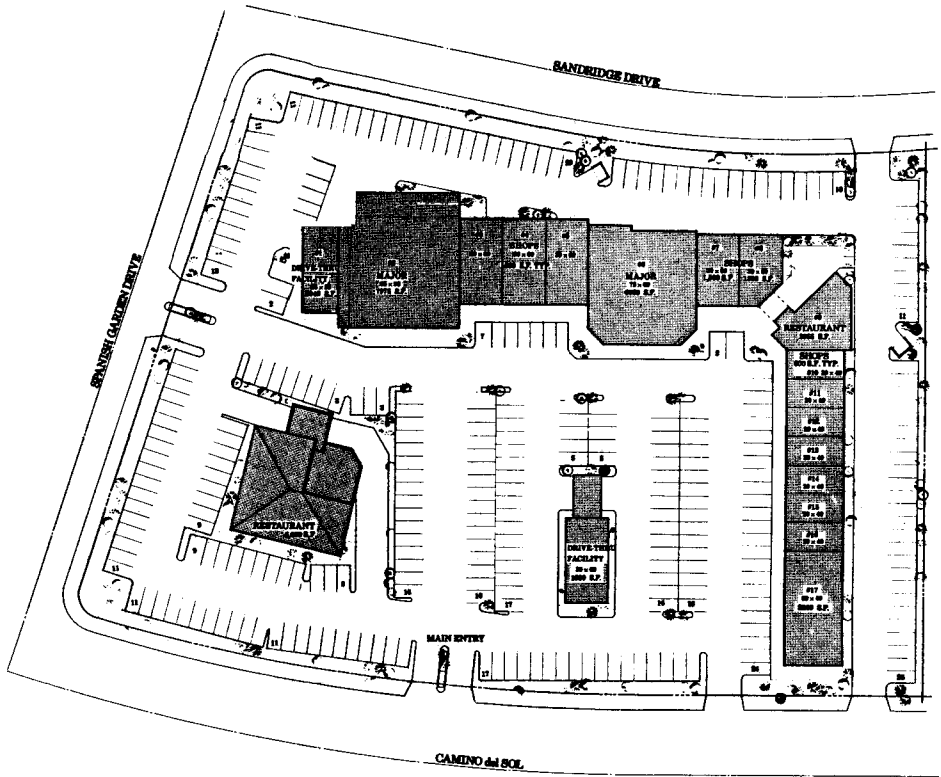
Bob's Variety Store brought a new look to Sundome Plaza in November 1989 with the addition of an outside sales area. Few in the community knew the problem this had presented to the store's owner, Bob Riddles. The Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Commission had turned down his initial request for a permit for the addition. This was in an era before major stores had added outdoor selling areas for plants and furniture, and the commission wasn't ready to break with tradition. Riddles went to his county supervisor, a local Sun City West resident, and presented the case to him. He agreed, and with his support, the Commission approved Riddles' request, 7-0. But, the zoning people had the last word, requiring extensive steel girder reinforced concrete beneath ground, and steel girders in the roof above.

The last major change in the shopping center was completed in April 1993 with the addition of 10,374-sq. ft. to the Safeway store, expanding its floor space by about 25 percent.

Mercado del Sol Adds to Local Shopping

DEVCO had sold the land on the northeast corner of Spanish Garden Drive and Camino del Sol to a private developer. In 1984, Rob Hardy, co-owner and partner with Inverness Inc. announced plans for a "boutique/retail-style center." According to Hardy, "Negotiations were under way with a women's handbag store, candy shop, travel agency, major drugstore chain and full service beauty salon."

Hardy also confirmed that the center would feature an expanded version of Grandma's Restaurant-Bakery, and a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet. He noted that "leasing activity was phenomenal with



The 1984 plan for the Mercado del Sol shopping center. *August 1984 SCW Activities Calendar*

75% of the interest coming from well-established merchants in the Sun City area.”

The new center opened in November 1984 with almost none of the previously mentioned shops. The first major stores to open were Quinn & Loe Clothiers and Draper’s & Damon’s Ladies Fashions. Grandma’s Restaurant-Bakery-Ice Cream Parlor and Lounge occupied the corner where Carrie’s Restaurant and Lakeside Florist are now located. Evidently Grandma’s had a short life, being replaced by the J. B. Sousa Restaurant and Bar. Stone’s Shoes opened next to Draper & Damons, and Hansen’s deli and liquor store was located in what is now a dance studio.

The First Restaurants

The Sun City West Vacation Headquarters Building opened in December 1978, with the beautiful Crestview Restaurant overlooking Hillcrest Golf Course, a cocktail lounge and a ballroom that also was used for banquets. It quickly became the social center for local residents.

The Salad Bar Restaurant (now the Garden Café) in the Camino del Sol (now Sundome Plaza) shopping center was the second restaurant in town, opening in April 1980.

Fast food didn't arrive until the fall of 1986 with the opening of an Arby's followed by a Dairy Queen a decade later. The first Chinese restaurant also arrived in 1986.

In the early 1980s, DEVCO had tried to interest the operators of the successful Lakes Club in Sun City, the Club Corporation of America (CCA), to place a similar facility in Crestview. CCA came back with a proposal to buy Hillcrest, and to turn Crestview into a clubhouse with dining. The golf course architect who designed Hillcrest thought it would ruin the course to start and end play at Crestview. And, since



For only \$6.95, one could enjoy the Sunday Champagne Brunch at the Crestview Restaurant in January 1983. Choices included five hot entrees including roast beef, 12 delicious salads and a dessert table filled with sweet temptations. Many residents found this brunch an ideal accompaniment to a Sunday matinee performance at the Sundome. January 1983 *SCW Activities Calendar*

DEVCO wasn't really interested in selling Hillcrest at that time, the deal fell through.

The restaurant was owned and operated by DEVCO until 1983 when it turned the operation over to a lessee. In 1988, the property was sold to an investment group headed by the Bades brothers. Their first restaurant lessee folded after six months. They then turned to Tom Mallaro who leased and operated the restaurant, lounge and ballroom until 1996. The first year, he operated it as the "Country Kitchen at Crestview," but dropped the franchise a year later.

In 1996, the Crestview building was sold to the Anthony Mamola family for \$1.25 million and they renamed the restaurant "Terrace on the Green." In December 1997, the building was sold to Joe Jobe, a Sun City investor. The contract called for the Mamolas to continue to operate the restaurant for six months. Business was slow and they did not renew their lease.

Jobe eventually sold the property to Semper Development of Minneapolis for \$1.5 million. Semper retained a portion of the land to build a Walgreens store on the corner, and sold the remaining 5.5 acres, including the Crestview building, to Anxon, Inc.

In 2000, the community learned that the building was being purchased by a California restaurateur, Genaro Guizar, who planned to reopen it as a Mexican restaurant. He said he invested more than \$200,000 in updating the kitchen and making needed repairs to the building. The opening kept being postponed due to a shortage of staff. It finally opened without fanfare in March 2001 to those curious enough to venture in. The final blow was the construction of the new Walgreens Drug Store just outside the front door, cutting down on traffic, and the restaurant site failed a third time.

Other "First" Businesses

Sun City West's first financial institution, the 137th branch in Arizona of First National Bank of Arizona, opened on April 1, 1979. The business was located in a trailer along R. H. Johnson Boulevard in front of the Crestview building. One year later, the bank opened new, permanent quarters on the northwest corner of R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol. In later years, First National became First Interstate, and then Wells Fargo.

By the end of Sun City West's first year, the population was only 1,200, but 15 building sites had been sold for banks and savings and loan associations.

The Del Webb Corporation was the first Realtor here, handling resales, as well as new home sales. Since many early homes had been bought on speculation, there was a glut of finished, but unoccupied, homes for sale. Other Realtors managed to get some listings, but the Del Webb realty people did not share commissions and were not part of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). That changed in 1980, when a new manager arrived and convinced the firm that sales would be accelerated if all properties were included in MLS.

O'Keefe Red Carpet Realty was the first "outside" Realtor to locate in Sun City West, operating an office in Sundome Plaza.

Automotive service was important to residents and a Mobil station opened on Camino del Sol and R. H. Johnson Boulevard in June 1980. Even though there were no food stores open yet in Sun City West, the station was denied a permit to sell milk and bread in addition to gasoline. About the same time, Sun City West Auto Service opened further west along Camino del Sol.

The year 1983 brought the first stock brokerage to Sun City West when E. F. Hutton opened for business in the Sundome Plaza.

The community's first funeral home, Camino del Sol Funeral Chapel and Cremation Center, opened in September 1989. Three generations of Darbys were involved in planning the new business, coming to Sun City West from Danville, Ill. The facility includes a crematorium, Eternal Peace Columbarium and a River of Life Meditation



The first gas station opened in June 1980 at the corner of R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol. At that time, a second station was planned for R. H. Johnson and Meeker Boulevards. *July 1980 SCW Newsletter*

Garden, added in December 2000. Owner Linda Darby-Sempsrott emphasized that, "We don't plan funerals here, we celebrate lives."

Space for a Train Station

At the junction of R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Grand Avenue, there is a long, indented section in the wall that marks the border of Sun City West. This property is owned by the Santa Fe Railroad and was designated for a railroad station as part of the land grant given to the railroad in the 1800s. But chances of a station are highly unlikely, especially since today's passing trains carry freight, not passengers.

Pressure Builds for a Post Office

By 1985, Sun City West had nearly 12,000 residents and was adding 2,000 new ones each year. The 12 mail delivery routes in the new city were growing at the rate of 200 new homes a month. All mail was delivered from the Sun City Post Office and residents had to drive there for many services.

In June 1980, Today's Swim and Patio Furniture Store had received a one-year contract to operate a Sun City West Postal Station in the Camino del Sol Shopping Center (now Sundome Plaza). When it went out of business, Lakeside Florist picked up the contract. But the lack of a full-service post office was acutely felt during the year-end holiday season.

In the mid-1980s the Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA) took the lead in gathering support for a local post office and urged residents to write Senators Goldwater and DeConcini for their support. The new local paper, *The Wester*, joined in with editorials favoring the proposal.

The U. S. Postal Service, however, was faced with the same problem facing all governmental agencies as services were cut or curtailed in the late 1980s. In addition, the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act required the postal service to cover the cost of building and maintaining facilities, as well as the costs of delivering mail. In March 1991, Sun City Postmaster Helen Kennedy was quoted as being convinced that Sun City West requirements were being met by the Sun City Post Office. As a result, it appeared that it would be years before an office would open in Sun City West.

The issue continued to build heat. PORA formed a post office committee in 1990, and a focused effort began. Petitions were circulated within the community, and more than 11,000 signatures were gathered in less than three weeks. Virginia Smith, committee chairperson and a former member of Congress, hand-delivered the petitions to the Postmaster General. According to Smith, "He was surprised to see so many signatures and indicated he had no idea there was so much concern out here."

In September 1991, Postmaster General Anthony Frank toured Sun City West on a fact-finding mission and met with representatives of PORA and the community. PORA Vice President Morey Jensen recalled the videotape that was prepared for the postmaster general's visit. It included scenes of the crowded parking lot at the Sun City Post Office, cars circling the block waiting for space, and the little-used Youngtown Post Office. At that time, Sun City West was the 16th largest community in Arizona and there were 115 post offices in smaller communities throughout the state.

DEVCO offered to donate land, construct a new facility on it and then lease it to the Postal Service if Frank would approve a new postal station. Despite the entreaties of the local representatives and DEVCO, Frank said a decision wouldn't be made before the end of the year.

Senator DeConcini had lobbied since 1985 for a separate post office and was as disappointed as the residents when the Postmaster General announced in December 1991 that the U.S. Postal Service would not open a new post office, but would instead expand the Lakeside Florist station. The intent was to move the location to a larger store at the other end of the shopping mall. Residents protested that this did not address one of the greatest problems — a lack of parking.

The Postmaster General announced later the same month that there would be a new, centrally located contract station in addition. Bob's V&S Variety Store would be the location.

Finally, after years of petitions and lobbying, Senator DeConcini's office announced in September 1992 that the joint House-Senate Conference Committee had approved appropriations for the Treasury-Postal Service and General Government bill, which contained a \$5-million line item for a Sun City West Post Office. The bill passed the House and Senate, and was signed by President George Bush.

Initially, a 4.79-acre parcel was selected at the corner of Camino del Sol and Meeker Boulevard for the 21,000-sq. ft. building. PORA



Post office groundbreaking ceremonies in 1994 included: Howie Wilson (left) a prime mover in the drive to gain community support for a local post office; Virginia Smith (center) PORA director and chairperson of a committee which spear-headed the effort to gain legislative support; and E. Wayne Titus (right) who co-chaired a petition drive by the Kiwanis Club of Sun City West that obtained more than 11,000 signatures. *July 29, 1994 Sun Cities Independent*

and others favored a five-acre site in the commercial core at Sandridge Drive and 139th Avenue, citing more adequate truck, vehicle and pedestrian access. That site won out, and postal officials announced that the building size would be increased to 26,000-sq. ft. to serve the Del Webb Corporation's 3,200-acre planned development in Surprise (Sun City Grand), as well as the local community.

Ground was broken in July 1994, and the new post office officially opened for business in February 1995. It had two features not found in other post offices in the area: a self-service postal store and a drive-up window. In addition, it had three full-service counter stations inside. Sun City Postmaster Mark Strong said the new office would employ 95 persons who had been working in the Sun City office. He also indicated that the two contract stations in Lakeside Florist and Bob's V&S Variety would continue to provide postal services. Only the latter, however, continues to serve postal patrons to the present day.

Commercial Climate Changes with Time

In 1983, Del Webb had sold the central 55-acre plot intended for a regional mall to a Phoenix-based real estate firm. Provisions of the sale restricted its use to a regional mall unless another regional center was built within eight miles of Sun City West during the next ten years. Shortly after, the Del Webb Corporation decided to scale down

its plans for Sun City West and sold Phase II land in a series of transactions between 1983 and 1986. Talk of a major regional mall east of Sun City along Bell Road had surfaced. The combination of a smaller-than-expected population, an out-of-the-way location and more competition resulted in the collapse of plans for a regional mall within Sun City West, and signaled the first major shift in the commercial climate.

In 1979, it was announced that construction would begin the next year on a second shopping center at 128th Avenue and Beardsley Road. It would include a Luckys Grocery Store and a Longs Drugstore, both major chains. Changing economic conditions caused construction to be postponed.

As time passed, it became apparent that there was little need for satellite shopping centers within the community. In 1991, the parcel between Stardust Boulevard and 147th Drive, west of R. H. Johnson Boulevard, was rezoned from commercial to residential for 47 single-family homes. In addressing concerns over adding more people to the community, a Webb organization spokesman pointed out that 1,000 home sites were lost when Trail Ridge Golf Course opened in 1989. This course was not part of the original development plan.

Inverness Companies had purchased the land on the northwest corner of Stardust Boulevard and Beardsley Road, and in 1987 admitted it had been a bad decision on their part. Traffic counts weren't high enough to attract the grocery and drug stores originally envisioned for the property. Restaurant owners weren't interested for the same reason. One novel suggestion was to build a private, non-profit dining club. The construction of the Crossroads Center just south of the community on Bell Road in Surprise was the final blow.

The land was repurchased by the Del Webb Corporation and rezoned residential. The first of 56 homes was begun in 1993 in what the new residents called "Amigoland" based on the name of Amigo Drive and the new "Neighborhood of Friends."

Smaller commercial reserves remained at Beardsley Road and Stardust Boulevard, 151st Avenue and R. H. Johnson Boulevard, Stardust Boulevard and Echo Mesa Drive, along with a new reserve at 151st Avenue and Deer Valley Drive that was set aside as part of the expansion area planning. A 56-bed Arden Courts Alzheimer's Care Center (now Alterra Clare Bridge) was opened on a portion of the latter site in 1998. A 1999 announcement of a Walgreens store on the

southeast corner of 151st Avenue and Deer Valley Drive drew strong opposition from neighbors, and was withdrawn.

Finally, a Second Grocery Store

The search for a second grocer proved elusive despite the best efforts of DEVCO. While Safeway saw enough business to expand its store 25% in 1993, efforts to attract a second supermarket came up empty-handed. Webb hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility study to be given to interested grocery chains, but they all felt that Sun City West didn't have the population base to support a second store. Another obstacle was the summer exodus that results in a 40% reduction in volume, according to Safeway.

In 1995, the Barclay Group bought the 5.4 acres near the intersection of Meeker and R. H. Johnson boulevards. They announced plans to construct a Smitty's Super-Value Supermarket the following summer. In spring 1996, Smitty's merged with Smith's and the Barclay Group sought a new grocer. ABCO began considering the site when it determined that its Bell Road location in Surprise wasn't drawing as many Sun City West shoppers as hoped. They felt a more prominent location in the heart of the community would be key to its success. The new ABCO store opened in December 1996. While popular with residents, the store did not develop sufficient volume, and closed in 2000. The opening of two new supermarkets in Surprise along Grand Avenue at Meeker Boulevard, plus a super Wal-Mart, provided too much competition for too few customers.

In July 2002, Bashas' Inc. announced that they had leased the former ABCO building and would open a Bashas' Supermarket in October. Bashas' is well established in the eastern half of the Greater Phoenix area, and has plans for several new stores in the western part of the Valley.

The opening of major retail outlets at Bell Road and Grand Avenue provides added convenience to Sun City West residents and major challenges for its retailers. Who will survive? Who will thrive? Only the future will tell.

Chapter 13

Water and Fire Services

Where Does the Water Come From...?

Six hundred feet under this part of the Valley, lie strata of rock, sand and gravel that contain water. Seven of the wells drilled by the Circle One Livestock Company for agricultural use were modified by Sun City West Utilities Company (now Arizona-American Water Company) to provide high quality ground water for drinking. Three additional wells have been drilled to meet the water needs of a city of more than 30,000 residents. Well water goes to one of two pumping stations where it is treated with chlorine. From there, it is piped to homes on demand.

On an average day, 5.5 million gallons are pumped. July is the peak month with daily rates of 8 million gallons. Usage drops in August with the onset of the monsoon season, and declines slowly until October and November when winter rye is planted in the green spaces around many of the condos. Demand is flat from November until April when residents increase their watering of plants.

These figures do not include golf course usage, as courses are served by their own wells. In the future, it is expected that the golf courses will use water from the Central Arizona Project, reducing demand on the underlying aquifer.

... and Where Does the Water Go?

Sun City West wastewater finds its way via gravity through sewer pipes to a pumping station on the northwest corner of Bell and El Mirage roads. Four lift pumps send it on to the wastewater treatment plant on Beardsley Road, east of Coyote Lakes, on the east side of the Agua Fria River.

This plant was put in service in 1981. Until it could be completed, DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) had to provide a temporary plant to serve the first residents. This was located along Grand Avenue north of Bell Road.



A new generation of refinements in 1980 eliminated the unattractive sights and smells associated with sewage treatment plants. Aluminum domes up to 125-feet in diameter covered treatment pools at the new plant. Odors were “scrubbed” through hydrogen peroxide to make the plant a “good neighbor.” *May-June 1980*
WEBB SPINNER

Del Webb Corporation, through an agreement with the Sun City West Utilities Company, provided the land and constructed the present plant about a mile east of Sun City West. The initial capacity was 2,140,000 gallons/day. In 1994, the plant was expanded, adding one million gallons/day of capacity to accommodate the final population of Sun City West.

Twenty-four recharge basins, each the size of a football field, lie to the south of the plant. Each day, approximately 3 million gallons of treated wastewater are pumped into the basins to recharge the aquifer. Treated solid wastes, residuals from the wastewater treatment process, are plowed into a field ad-

jacent to the plant in accordance with a strictly monitored U.S. Environmental Protection Agency program.

Creating a Fire District

The rapid growth of the community raised concerns about adequate fire protection. Fire and rescue services were provided from Sun City stations at 111th and Grand avenues, and 99th and Bell Road, and from Litchfield Park. In the case of an emergency, distance slowed the response time.

A serious house fire in October 1980 brought the issue to a boil. Due to the length of time it took for trucks to arrive, the house at 13422 Shadow Hills Drive was severely damaged. This prompted a group of concerned citizens to form the Fire District of Sun City West, a governmental entity. At that time, the community had about 8,900 residents.

The RV Joint Venture

Originally, the wastewater treatment plant was planned to serve the entire 13,000 acres of Phase I and II. The resulting discharge fields would have stretched nearly a mile south of Bell Road. Once the Del Webb Corporation sold off the land southwest of Grand Avenue, the need for discharge fields was reduced, and the land south of Bell Road was available for other uses.

Pressure had been building within Sun City for more space to store recreational vehicles (RVs), boats and trailers. DEVCO decided to build a storage facility on a portion of the land south of Bell Road. At first, the Sun City RVers were delighted! They soon learned, however, that this facility would have to serve both Sun City and Sun City West. DEVCO was willing to build “the world’s largest storage facility,” but they were going to build only one!

Sun City residents wanted nothing to do with a shared facility. In their opinion, there was nobody out in Sun City West anyway, so it should belong to them. Several meetings were held, and each time DEVCO told the attendees the matter was not open for debate, and that they should sit down with their Sun City West counterparts to develop a joint agreement on ownership and management. They were further told that DEVCO wouldn’t begin building the facility until they had an agreement worked out.

Finally, cooler heads prevailed, and the two communities worked out a mutually acceptable agreement. It is particularly significant, as it is the only on-going, jointly-owned-and-operated facility in the Sun Cities, and could be a model for the future as the communities continue to mature. It also now accommodates residents of Sun City Grand after a Webb-financed expansion.

Size of Fire District Causes Controversy

The Sun City West Fire Protection Committee, which had been organized by DEVCO in 1978, supported forming a district that included both the existing community (Phase I) and the undeveloped land owned by the Del Webb Corporation to the west (Phase II). A second group backed by the Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA), favored a fire district limited to Phase I.

The matter was the number one subject of conversation for months. DEVCO even made the Sundome available for two public meetings. On April 27, 1981, close to 50% of the community's registered voters selected the Phase I Proposal, 1,041 to 707. The proposal to include Phase II lost. All five members of the committee favoring the Phase I proposal were elected to the new board. Victor Simpson, who headed the PORA-sponsored committee, was elected chairman.

Rural/Metro Provides First Local Fire Services

The new fire district hired Rural/Metro Corporation to provide basic services. A complex agreement among Rural/Metro, Boswell Memorial Hospital in Sun City and Sun City West Utilities resulted in a modular building being erected on the site of the future ABCO Market along Meeker Boulevard. A fire station was on one side, a medical clinic housing Sun City West's first doctor was in the middle, and Associated Ambulance provided an emergency unit housed on the other side.

Jim Heger and Louis Chappell were two of the first firefighters assigned



The first fire station was set up in a former Boswell Hospital building that was moved from Sun City to Meeker Boulevard. Until more permanent quarters were completed, personnel were on hand during the day and at the Sun City fire station at 99th Avenue and Bell Road at night. Capt. Paul Williams (left) and firefighter Jim Heger, take a look at equipment shown by firefighter Stu Glenn in this 1981 photo. *June 13, 1981 Daily News-Sun*

to the new station. Heger is now fire marshal and Chappell is captain of the ladder truck at Station 103 at 135th Avenue and Deer Valley Drive. These two men, along with two other firefighters and a lieutenant, formed the initial crew. There were two men on each 24-hour shift and the lieutenant was on duty for 8 hours a day. The district purchased a 1954 Van Pelt fire truck with an open cab, and soon after a mini-pumper, giving each member of the crew a truck.

Plans for Station 101 Unveiled

The newly elected Sun City West fire board moved quickly to hire an architect to plan an 8,000-sq. ft. station for land donated by DEVCO at Camino del Sol and R. H. Johnson Boulevard. Plans were shown to the community in September 1981 subject to approval of the exterior design by DEVCO.

Chairman Victor Simpson also announced a unique lease-purchase

agreement to finance the new building and equipment. According to the attorney, Ron Larson, the state had just passed a statute allowing this type of financing for public projects. In his opinion, Sun City West would be the first to take advantage of it.

DEVCO had deeded the land to the district. The district board, in turn, deeded it to Valley National Bank as collateral for a loan to construct the building and to purchase equipment. The district reacquired the land as payments were made on the debt. Interest costs for this type transaction were much less than had the district been



Members of the first Sun City West fire district board participate in groundbreaking for Station 101 on Dec. 31, 1981. From left, Charles Geyer, Chairman Victor Simpson, Tony Barraco, Delores Lowe and Jim Maley. Construction, however, would not begin for several months due to an error in the way bids were requested. *Jan. 2, 1982 Daily News-Sun*

forced to issue bonds. The arrangement allowed the district to pay for and take ownership of the fire station in less than four years.

Mistake Saves District \$100,000

After accepting an apparent low bid of \$475,000 from Double AA Construction of Phoenix and breaking ground on Dec. 31, it was discovered that the fire district had failed to place a legal notice in a local newspaper regarding the call for bids back in November. The contract with Double AA Construction was not signed and the bid was advertised a second time. E.J. Turley Builders of Mesa submitted the low bid of \$369,611, saving the community more than \$100,000.

The fire district next called for bids on two 1,000-gallon, diesel-engine fire trucks, estimated to cost about \$75,000 each. Asked if the bids were being properly advertised, Chairman Simpson replied, "Yes. One mistake is enough for any fool."

Driving Trucks from Buffalo Saves \$2,400

The Phoenix-area dealer for Mack Trucks submitted the winning bid for the two new fire trucks. The manufacturer offered the city the opportunity to save delivery charges of \$1,200 per truck by picking them up in Buffalo, N.Y., where they were built.

The local dealer agreed to send a man to drive one of the trucks to Sun City West. Fire district chairman Victor Simpson agreed to drive back the second. He and his wife, Margaret, took turns driving the truck on the long trip west. Simpson recalled that many passing drivers would wave to Margaret but no one waved at him!

The new Station 101 opened in September 1982 with a



Fire district chairman Victor Simpson parks the community's new pumper. He and his wife drove the truck from Buffalo in August 1982 to save the district the \$1,200 delivery charge. *Aug. 31, 1982 Daily News-Sun*

crew of four plus a district chief. An ambulance was also obtained and all services continued to be provided by Rural/Metro.

Station 102 Added in November 1990

By 1990, population was nearing 19,000. A second station was built on Stardust Boulevard, east of R. H. Johnson Boulevard. Twenty firefighters staffed the two stations. Along with a new station, the district acquired a second ambulance and a 50-foot “telesquirt” — a truck equipped with an aerial apparatus. The fire tax rate increased 60% due to the district doubling in size.

Unrest Among the Firefighters

Firefighters were working 72-hour weeks, and pay was poor resulting in high turnover. The contract with Rural/Metro was up for renewal in 1993, and the new one proposed by them asked for a 10-year contract with a 10% annual increase. This would not have resulted in more firefighters or additional equipment. Morale and working conditions were less than acceptable and the fire district board voted to run its own fire department.

In July 1994, the Sun City West Fire District of Sun City West began employing its own personnel instead of contracting with Rural/Metro. A great majority of the Rural/Metro firefighters chose to remain with the new district. There were now 27 full-time firefighters, one mechanic, and an office staff of three. In December, they began a three-platoon shift system whereby each crew was on a 24-hour shift every third day, reducing the workweek to 56 hours. Even after hiring more firefighters, the fire tax dropped 17%.

Growth Requires Third Station

The addition of the expansion area had increased the size of the community by almost one-third. With some 17,000 homes, a third station was deemed necessary. DEVCO donated land and \$500,000 for construction. Station 103 opened for service in February 1999 at 135th Avenue and Deer Valley Drive. Twelve additional firefighters were hired, a new fire pumper purchased, and a third ambulance, purchased in 1997, was moved to Station 103.

During 1998-1999, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mandated the “two in/two out” safety rule. This

meant there must always be two firefighters inside a burning structure supported by two outside in the event a rescue was needed. This necessitated four men on an engine, which is how they operate today.

Sleep Safely in Sun City West!

With three stations, the Sun City West Fire District has one of the best response times of any district in the Valley. The National Fire Protection Association recommends a four-minute response time, and the district prides itself on regularly beating this.

As a result, many lives have been saved by the prompt arrival of paramedics. With one exception where the call did not come in until the fire was well under way, fires have been quickly extinguished. Thankfully, no lives have been lost to fire. In 1982, there were 344 emergency calls. By 1990, this had grown to 1,424, and in 2000, to 3,902. Today, the district responds to an average of 12 calls per day with an average response time of three minutes, 30 seconds. Most calls are for medical help. Residents are fortunate to benefit from skilled personnel, adequate equipment and fast response.

Best of all, this service comes at one of the lowest tax rates in the Valley! A recent survey of 151 fire districts in Arizona showed that 78 had a higher tax rate than Sun City West's. Of the 73 districts with a lower tax rate, 69 rely on a majority of *volunteer* firefighters. It is unlikely that a volunteer department would be able to supply the same level and variety of service that Sun City West enjoys. It should also be noted that unlike many communities, Sun City West residents do not incur any "out of pocket" charges for ambulance service. The fire district subsidizes costs not covered by insurance for residents.

In 2002, Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) classified Sun City West as one of the top communities in the nation for fire protection. The district received a Class 2 rating by ISO in the category that classifies a fire department's ability to protect the public from fire. Some 45,000 fire departments across the nation have been analyzed on a scale of 1 (highest) to 10. Only 347 received ratings of Class 1 or Class 2. In Arizona, there were no Class 1 ratings, and the Sun City West Fire District was only one of five receiving the Class 2 rating.

GROWING SCOPE OF ACTIVE RETIREMENT

The people moving into Sun City West were an active group and it was inevitable that they would begin to look for things to do together. Many were newly retired and eager to pursue hobbies and interests for which they'd never had sufficient time while working. Interest in golf, bridge and biking led to some of the first organized activities and the earliest clubs.

But life was more than leisure time, and early residents sought other outlets for their considerable energy and talent. The civic and service organizations they had belonged to "back home" quickly took root in the new community. Those with acting or musical talent found outlets in local theater and an annual variety show. The latter would prove so popular it would raise more than a million dollars for the local hospital.

Many individuals sought more than social activities and volunteered for worthwhile causes. Others looked at the community and how it was run, then sought to be involved in the decision-making process.

In the four chapters in this section, we'll look at the evolution of clubs and organized sports, an annual showcase of local talent, volunteerism, and the drive for self-determination.

Chapter 14

Growth of Organized Activity

Less than a year after arrival of the first residents, club activity was going strong. DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) encouraged the formation of new clubs by offering space and equipment. Soon, the Rec Centers Association took over the chartering of clubs, assigning them space and providing them certain services plus insurance coverage. Chartered clubs are open to all Sun City West residents.

Today, there are 100 chartered clubs, plus numerous others including organized sports and states clubs. Gathered here are just some of the highlights of Sun City West clubs and sports activities over the past 25 years. "Snapshots" of them as they grew, innovated, celebrated...and became the vital, active community attractions they are today.

1979

The first three clubs to be chartered, in September 1979, were:

- ✧ Sun West Art Club with now almost 400 members.
- ✧ Toy-Ki Silvercraft West Club, beginning with 35 members and growing to more than 500. The unusual name came from a visit to the Heard Museum in Phoenix where members searched for a term that complemented their craft. A museum expert suggested the Flathead Indian word for silver: "Toy-Ki."
- ✧ Westerners Square Dance Club with more than 350 members.

Thirteen more clubs were chartered in the last three months of 1979.

1980

By mid-March 1980, the Village Store in the R. H. Johnson complex was open 9am to 3pm, Monday through Saturday. Several craft clubs were already up and operating and craft items from this rapidly growing list of clubs were being accepted for sale. Store volunteers from these early participating clubs helped Directors Marguerite Bidwell and Edna Panhorst. Sun City West crafters could now not only make their wares, but market them as well.

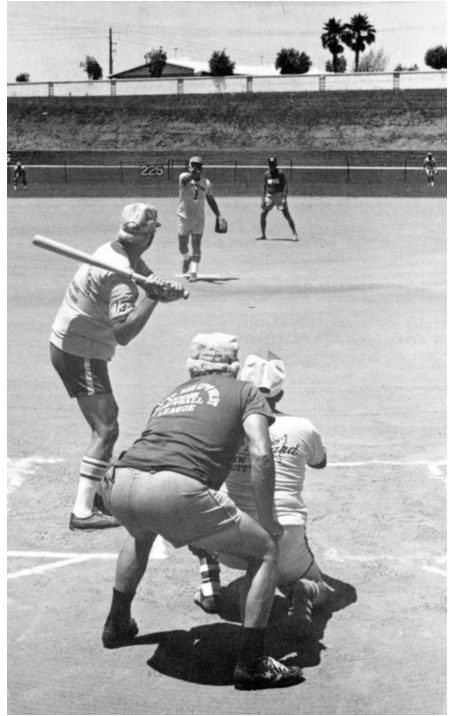
When early Westers weren't crafting they were dancing, it seems. Dance clubs grew quickly right from the start, but the growth of the Hillcrest Dance Club reached a meteoric milestone by June when the club, less than a year old, signed up its 1,000th and 1,001st members.

Also in its second season was the Arts & Crafts Fair, held November 7 and 8 at the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center. Craft rooms were open and demonstrations were offered. Participants included crafters and artists specializing in silvercraft, woodworking, needlecraft, ceramics and copper enameling.

By the end of 1980, there were 31 chartered clubs.

1981

Hogan Dunlevy started off the New Year by getting his picture in the January issue of the Sun City West Activities Calendar. Dunlevy



For the more sports-minded, and baseball aficionados in particular, there was the Sun City/Sun City West Senior Softball League. In the second season in 1980, the 120 avid baseball players enjoyed the slow-pitch league with its seven-inning games. Games were played at the Sun City Stadium until Sun City West got its own stadium in 1989. *July 1980 SCW Activities Calendar*



Fig. 14-2 Rounded beds with textured plantings and lacy palm trees won a first place award for Mr. and Mrs. David Kravitz, 19223 132nd Ave., in the first landscaping contest conducted by the Garden Club. The club's judging committee surveyed 4,000 front yards, and honored 11 homes in this 1980 contest. *December 1980 SCW Newsletter*

rolled a perfect 300 score at the R. H. Johnson Lanes, his first in 25 years of bowling. The game, verified by the American Bowling Congress, was the first ever in the retirement communities according to the local newsletter.

In January, the Recreation Centers signed an agreement with the Garden Club for the use of 6.2 acres of land leased from DEVCO. Located at Bell and Dysart roads, the land provided more than 200 garden plots. In April, the club held its first garden show in the R. H. Johnson Center arcade. The club had cuttings and plants available for anyone who gave a donation. Proceeds went to the Sun City West Library. Club members diagnosed plant problems, recommended treatment for troubled plants and even made house calls.

Sun City West clubs were always finding innovative ways to attract new members. The five members of the Chess Club hoped to increase membership by hosting the U. S. Senior Open Championship Chess Tournament in June. The 88 participants represented 18 states plus Mexico.

While some clubs were small in number and trying to attract new members, others were barreling along in the membership department. The Sun City West Bocce Club, for example, had some 500 members and participated in 16 leagues.

Seven new clubs were chartered in 1981, bringing the total to 38.



The Turf and Surf Club believed that exercise was the best way to increase energy while slimming down. In July 1981, some 75 women were being led through a series of water exercises at the Johnson Center pool. The club also offered water ballet, hula lessons, walking, jogging, swimming, parties and more. *July 1981 SCW Activities Calendar*

1982

The Mini-Golf Club numbered nearly 70 members and was preparing for its first Mini-Golf Tournament on January 14th.

The 230 members of the Woodworking Club kept the Village Store well stocked with all kinds of wood items. Popular pieces were exterior wall decorative sets of roadrunners and saguaros. Woodworkers were also

busy making garage cabinets, chairs, spice shelves, name plaques, picture frames, step stools and, of course, rocking horses and doll cradles for grandchildren.

Photography West had a new home by summer. DEVCO donated office space in a wing of the Sun City West Sales Pavilion. Included were a darkroom facility and a large inventory of photographic equipment including a Vivitar enlarger. The club was so thrilled with its new surroundings that it held an open house in July.

By the end of 1982, Ceramics West had raised enough money through sales of members' handicrafts to donate \$1,500 to several deserving groups. The appreciative recipients included the Posse, library, PRIDES and Lending Hands.

At the close of 1982, there were 43 chartered clubs.

1983

Theatre West had talented members and lots of initiative, but little in the way of props and costumes. So they had a Scavenger Party! Members went scavenging throughout the community in search of props, costumes, period clothes and furniture. Supportive residents cleaned out their closets, filling the prop room.

While Theatre West members were out scavenging, the 100-plus members of Encore Needle and Craft were meeting in the Arts and Crafts room at Johnson Recreation Center. Members worked on needlecraft, knitting, crocheting and embroidery — any craft with a needle!

The loom, not the needle, was the focus of Weavers West Guild members, who were engrossed in learning the art of Navajo weaving.

In October, Sun City West canasta, bridge and pinochle card players got an early Christmas present from the Del Webb Corporation, which donated new decks of playing cards to the card clubs. Each of the seven card clubs received 36 decks. Members couldn't wait to "break them in."

Another present — a birthday present — was given in October. Palo Verde Patchers worked all summer long on a "theme quilt" filled with symbols of all the activities at the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center. Members donated the quilt to the center on Oct. 15th, the fifth anniversary of the arrival of the first Sun City West residents. The quilt was put on display in the R. H. Johnson Recreation Administrative Office.

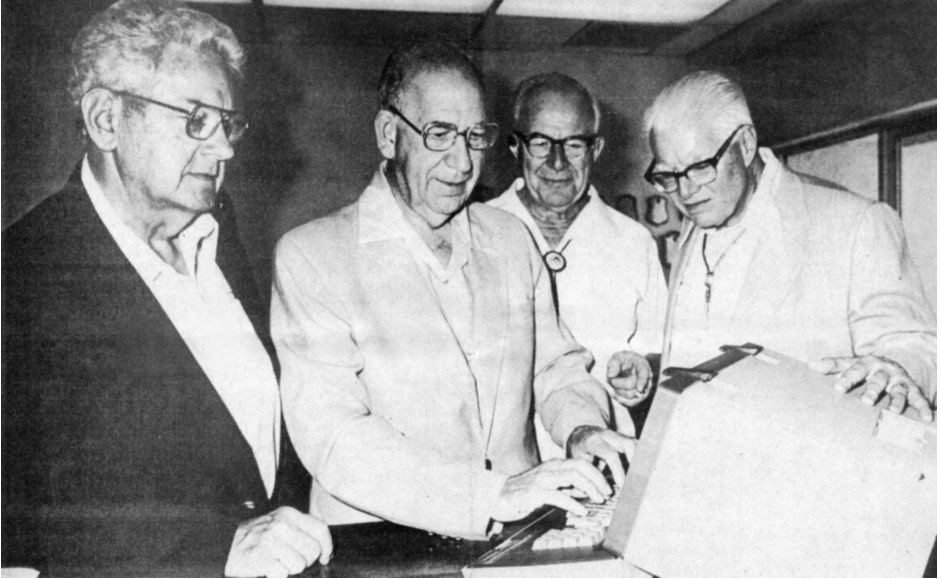
In five years, 47 chartered clubs had formed — almost half the total of the 101 in existence by Sun City West's 25th anniversary year.

1984

With more than 800 members, the RV Club was one of the largest chartered clubs in Sun City West. Club President Ed Pfeiffer proclaimed that "almost 10% of the people who move here have RVs." DEVCO was building a new compound south of Bell Road to accommodate 4,000 recreational vehicles from Sun City and Sun City West.

The Jazzercise Club proved that living in a retirement community didn't mean sitting in a rocking chair waiting for a call from the "Man Upstairs." Its 250 members, ranging in age from 45 to 80 (with an average age of 62), participated in a 55-minute, total body-conditioning program three times a week.

Reaping both physical and mental exercise were the 120 members of the Encore Round Dance Club. Dressed in their costumes, members looked like square dancers. Actually, they were performing a series of ballroom steps (waltz, two-step, fox trot, tango and cha-cha) choreographed and danced to cues given by a caller. Encore Round Dancers were a popular addition to the annual Sun City West Variety Show.



The Computers West Club began meeting in the Johnson Lecture Hall in April 1984. The first officers were (left to right) Andy Wielkiewicz, president; Dave Gilchrist, treasurer; Chuck Martin, vice president; and Lloyd Dixon, secretary. Little did they know then that this club would grow to more than 3,400 members and become the largest club in Sun City West. *July 17, 1984 Daily News-Sun*

While the community was only six years old, a 6,000-year old sport was being played by some of its residents. The Johnson Lawn Bowl Club had grown to 238 members. In 1984, the club hosted the Arizona State Championship Tournament and the first lawn bowling event in the Senior Olympics.

Since February, and all throughout the long, hot Arizona summer, Ceramics West had been keeping cool by working on a ceramic Christmas Village. In December, after more than 1,500 volunteer hours, members donated the 320 ceramic piece set to the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center. Members of the Woodworking Club built a display platform for the village.

Four other clubs had worked throughout the year on special Christmas projects. Encore Needle and Craft, Encore Rosemaling, Palo Verde Patchers and Creative Silk Flower clubs had each created a Christmas decoration representative of its club's craft. These were entered in DEVCO's first Christmas Tree Decorating Contest and adorned four

ten-foot trees in the model home sales pavilion. Residents voted for their favorite. The Encore Needle and Craft Club was the winner and received a \$500 prize from DEVCO.

1985

The informal meetings of chartered club presidents took on a more formal tone on Jan. 10th. That's when the newly elected presidents were invited to meet with Bill Woodyard, general manager of the Sun City West Rec Centers. The agenda: to meet other club presidents, key Rec Center employees and the Rec Center Advisory Board members.

The Westernaires billed themselves as a 65-member choral group when they presented their Annual Spring Concert in the Johnson Social Hall on April 28th.

Since January 1984, 51 of the members of the Copper Cookers Creations Club had been working on a two-section mural, 12-feet x 4-feet, entitled "Symbols of the Sun." The project was further helped by \$1,165 in donations from 109 members. The completed panels were placed at the entrance to the Arts and Crafts section of the new Beardsley Center.

Another donation came from the Turf and Surf Club. Its members donated a time clock to Beardsley's indoor pool area. The clock, 31-inches in diameter, enabled swimmers to determine pulse rate and compute lap time.

The Western Horseshoe Club was so happy with the new Beardsley Park



The opening of Beardsley Park Recreation Center in mid-1985 provided much needed space for the growing list of chartered clubs. The center's Social Hall (now the card rooms) became the home of the Sun City West Women's Social Club. Evelyn Sauer (left), Edna Wells and President Bernice Carnell helped break in the new facility. Other clubs moving in included the Clay, China Painting, Stained Glass, Copper Cookers Creations, Rhythm Tappers and Photography West. *June 1985 SCW Activities Calendar*

Center that it extended an invitation to all “FILLYS” in Sun City West to join.

On July 1, DEVCO gave the Garden Club an 8-acre site at the west end of 137th Drive. The club's new home came complete with a storage shed and security wall. All it needed was some green thumbs, and they soon appeared.

1986

In January, DEVCO hosted Sun City West's first “States Social” to assist residents in forming state clubs. Resident volunteers representing 22 states were on hand in Johnson Social Hall to sign-up prospective club members.

The newly formed Greenhouse Club had its very own glassed-in workspace in Beardsley Park. Members not only grew plants in soil but also experimented with hydroponics — growing plants in nutrient-rich water.



Eileen Luke learned to make baskets from pine tree needles while living in Prescott. Moving to Sun City West, her new friends asked her to teach them the art. They worked out of homes until the Basketeers Club was chartered in 1986. *Photo courtesy of Kathy Dolniak*

Another competition, another win. Toy-Ki Silvercraft West Club entered the annual Maricopa County Gem and Mineral Show at the Phoenix Fairgrounds in March. The club's first-time entry won a first-place ribbon and brought Valley-wide recognition to the club.

A springtime tradition continued as the Sun Cities Senior Softball team took on — and beat — the “Good Guys” team of DEVCO employees in this April community sports event.

The 120 members of the Sportsman's Club added hiking and bird watching to its list of activities. In May, members hosted a Fishing Clinic and Show at the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center. A panel of fishing experts was on

hand to answer questions, as were representatives from the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

On June 14th, the Duplicate Bridge Clubs of Sun City West sponsored the World Simultaneous Pairs Event. Bridge players in Beardsley Park Card Room #3 were playing the same hands as 200,000 bridge players in 70 countries in this first annual event.

For years Sun City West bowlers shared a Bowler's Hall of Fame with Sun City bowlers. But by October 1986, they had their own Hall of Fame. Jim Maley, Dick Clark and Bob O'Loughlin were the first inductees. Hogan Dunlevy, who had bowled a perfect 300 game a few years earlier, received a plaque for his achievement at the Hall of Fame ceremony.

1987

Westers had hit the jackpot in Las Vegas earlier, but in lawn bowling, not in gambling. Three teams from Sun City West competed in the World Championship Open Triples Indoor Lawn Bowling Tournament. They matched their skills against 64 teams from around the world, and brought home 12% of the total prize money!

Gold, silver and bronze were on the minds of Westers as the Arizona Senior Olympics got underway early in 1987. The Synchronettes won 43 medals — 28 gold, 11 silver and 4 bronze— in team and individual swimming competitions.

Gardeners interested in raising vegetables split off from the Garden Club. First known as the Garden Plots Club, the members soon changed the name to the Agriculture Club.

Dancing was still popular as was evident by the Seventh Annual Westerners Square Dance Jubilee and the Eighth Anniversary Ballroom Dance Party – both in April.

The April Musicians Club meeting had an unusual program: a trombone demonstration and an opera composed by one of the members! Members also launched a drive to purchase a grand piano. Some very grand plans, indeed!

The Chartered Club Directory listed 71 clubs by year's end.

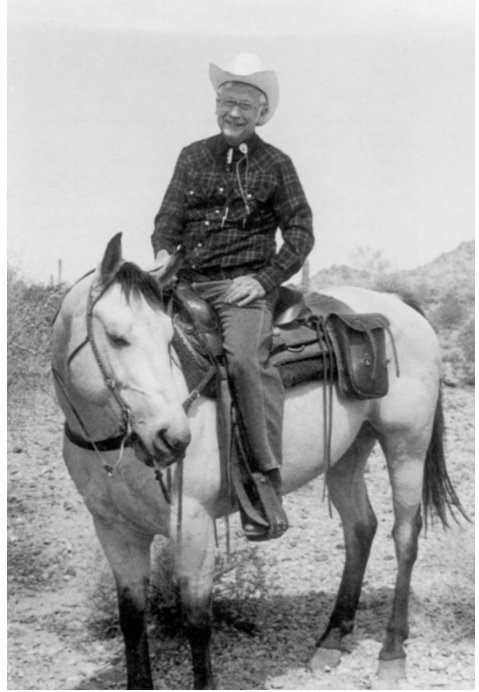
1988

The previous summer, the Sun Health Corporation commissioned the Copper Cookers Creations Club to create a mural for the soon-to-be opening Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. Club members raised

\$1,200 for supplies, designed the mural, cut the copper, enameled the mural's 84 pieces and then assembled them. Called "Arizona Reflections," the piece was hung in the lobby of the hospital. Forty-one members worked more than 1,500 hours on the mural that was dedicated to the memory of Jack Brady. Brady and his wife, Jean, founded the club that by 1988 had grown to be one of the largest copper-enameling clubs in the world.

The Dance Fitness Club held a fashion show with a twist, along with a luncheon in October. Called "Fall Into Fitness," the fashion show was really a short play about women attending a health resort. Club members modeled sportswear that ladies could wear for resort activities. Proceeds from the show went to the Sun City West Foundation to help with the cost of the third phase of the Community Services Building.

Another group raising funds for the Community Services Building was the Agua Fria Yacht Club. Imagine a yacht club in a desert! Members held a "Launching Party," including grog (wine) and chow down (chicken and fish). This was just one of the club's many activities to raise funds for the Community Services Building as the Agua Fria Yacht Club was an activity of the Sun City West Foundation.



Residents who brought horses with them, or just wanted to be around horses, headed for the Sun Cities Saddle Club. Open to those living in Sun City West or Sun City, the club offered trail rides from October through May. Lowell O'Grady and his favorite horse, "Powder," were among the group spending a day in Estrella Park, some 20 miles south, in 1988. The Sun City Stables are located near the Agua Fria Riverbed, south of Bell Road at 115th Avenue. In 1988, the club had 136 members. *September 1988 SCW Activities Calendar*

1989

“Elegant” was the word to describe the March 17th opening night of the Stardust Theatre, located in the equally new Fred Kuentz Recreation Center. The black tie gala came complete with champagne and canapés served during intermission. The program presented by the Stardust Theatre Council was appropriately called “Stardust Review,” and included the talents of members of the Rhythm Tappers, Musicians Club, Westernaires, Theatre West and the Organ and Keyboard Club. Proceeds from opening night went to benefit the Stardust Theatre Equipment and Operating Fund.

Tournaments were always big in Sun City West. Del Webb’s fourth annual “Swing into Spring” Seniors Tennis Tournament was held March 31 through April 3 at R. H. Johnson Recreation Center tennis courts.

And for those in their 60s who weren’t tennis fans, there was Del Webb’s “Amazing 60s” Senior Softball Tournament played in March at the Grand Avenue softball field. Twelve teams competed from across the Southwest.

With the opening of the new softball field, known as Kuentz Field, even the ladies wanted to take their turn at the plate. Westers Norma Salsman and Lois Simpler put out the word that they were organizing a women’s softball team. The headline in the *Sun City West Activities Calendar* read, “Bat Women in SCW?”

Batting or tapping, local women could excel at both. The Rhythm Tappers entered a statewide dance competition and won first place in their category. They also won a cash award for first place overall based on points won competing against ALL ages.

1990

Newly chartered clubs in 1990 included the 500 Cards Club, Hot Shots and Trail Ridge Women’s Golf.

1991

At a September open house in the two-year-old Fred Kuentz Recreation Center, more than 22 local arts and crafts clubs exhibited their creative talents in the hopes of attracting even more new members. The Rhythm Tappers tapped. The Ballet Club pirouetted. Members of the Musicians Club and the Organ and Keyboard Club played all

the favorite tunes. Among the clubs giving visitors reasons to move to Sun City West were: Woodworking, Metal, Art, Basketeers, Coin and Stamp, Rosemaling, Tole, Quilters, Leather Carvers, Weavers, Encore Needle and Craft, Creative Silk Flowers, Spanish, Knitting and Macrame, Theatre West and Calligraphy.

The open house was sponsored by one of the biggest clubs, the 943-member Women's Social Club. The ladies increased their club membership by 13 members only two hours into the event! Besides sponsoring the open house, the ladies were known for hosting salad luncheons, holiday luncheons and fashion shows, and taking trips to various sites throughout the Valley. Great card players, too, they could be found in their Kuentz clubroom shuffling up a game of bridge, canasta or other card games. When the football season struck, they started a Monday night program for "football widows."

New clubs formed this year included Bunco and Dancing Arts.

1992

Club activity hummed along at the various sites throughout Sun City West. This was one of the few years to go by without a new club receiving a charter.

1993

By the summer of 1993, nearly 22,000 residents were members of the Rec Centers of Sun City West. Country Western Dance, Cribbage and Line Dancers clubs were chartered this year.

Several of the 87 chartered clubs were "bursting at the seams," and had submitted requests for space in the new Palm Ridge Rec Center that would open in April 1994. Those anticipating space in a "new home" included:

- ✧ The 87 members of the Ballet Club who would share space with the Rhythm Tappers.
- ✧ The Computers West and Stained Glass clubs that would be moving from Beardsley Park.
- ✧ The 430 members of the Organ and Keyboard Club who had outgrown their Stardust Theatre location and were considering a move to Palm Ridge.

1994

It's said, "dogs are man's best friends," so what could be more natural than a club for them? Canine Companions Club was chartered in 1994 for canines and their human companions. Soon, more than 300 doggies and their "best friends" belonged to the club and "socialized" at the R. H. Johnson Dog Park. Club membership included quarterly general meetings with programs on dog obedience, pet care and dog health. Costume parties and contests added to the fun.

The opening of a new golf course led to the formation of the Deer Valley Men's Golf Club and the Deer Valley Women's Golf Club, along with a new Golf Council Club.

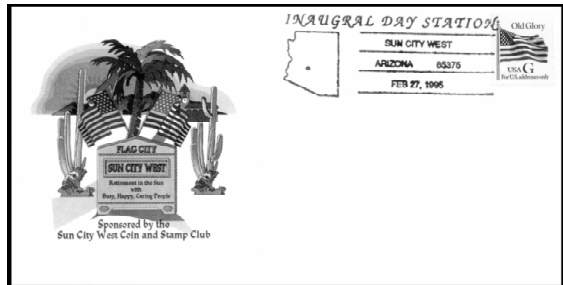
Other clubs chartered in 1994 included Creative Stitchers, Latin Ballroom Dance, Racquet /Handball and Yoga.

1995

The Saturday Night Gamesters Club came on the scene this year. It was formed by singles and couples who didn't want to sit home on Saturday nights if there was a chance to play cards. Name the game, they played it: poker, double-deck pinochle, euchre, gin rummy, hearts and even murder. That kept everyone sharp on a Saturday night!

Rip 'n Sew club members showed the breadth of their talent and competency by publishing a cookbook late in the year.

The opening of the Desert Trails Golf Course resulted in the formation of new Desert Trails Men's and Women's Golf clubs.



The Coin and Stamp Club sponsored a contest in 1994 to design a special cachet to commemorate the opening of the new Sun City West Post Office. The \$50 prize was won by Patricia Burch who designed the above inscription for use on envelopes on Feb. 27, 1995, the day the new Post Office opened.

1996

The Women's Social Club hosted a Toys for Kids program each December. This offered Sun City West residents an opportunity to donate a toy for a child in the area who otherwise might not get a holiday gift.

The artistic members of the Creative Silk Flowers Club arranged a special exhibit of their work at the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital.

1997

Western Horseshoe Club members showed their skill in taking first and second place with a 16-12 win over Prescott in January.

While it had only been in its new home at the Palm Ridge Rec Center for three years, Computers West was ready for a remodeling job by 1997. With more than 3,400 members, the club needed to use its space more efficiently in order to keep up with the demand for classes and special-interest groups.

1998

One new chartered club came on the scene this year: the International Dance and Social Club with 120 members. It more than tripled in size in the next few years.

Two golf clubs were to begin activities that became annual events. The Deer Valley Women's Golf Club began "adopting" families from the Nadaburg School in Wittman, ten miles northwest of Sun City West, providing them with clothes, food and toys. At the same time, volunteers from the Pebblebrook Men's Club — known as the "Pebblebrook Prides" — began scouring the Pebblebrook golf course the third Thursday of each month to repair ball marks and sand the divots. The Sun City West PRIDES were the inspiration behind these golf course caretakers.

1999

A new tournament came to town on August 7. Called the Sun City West Summer Teams, teams of two persons had to bowl three games of Scotch Doubles, play three games of billiards and three games of shuffleboard. Points were given to determine who won.

The men's Hot Shots Club and the women's Mis-Cues Club were happy players in the fall. By then, all the tables had been given new

covers: 25 pool tables, four snooker tables and one billiard table. That's some cover-up!

The Rec Centers Governing Board adopted a revised set of rules for chartered clubs on October 28. The major revision called for equal dues for every member of a club. Some clubs had been charging couples the same dues as they did for individuals. Clubs were reminded that they were registered with the IRS as tax-exempt 501(c)(7) Social Clubs in compliance with IRS Publication 557, and this prohibits identical dues for different services.

2000

With the New Year came a new name for one of the chartered clubs: the Turf and Surf Club, originally chartered in 1980, became the Water Fitness Club.

The Karaoke Club brought the number of chartered clubs to an even 100. It began in May with 99 members.

Country Western Dance Club members were doing the Arizona two-step, waltz, cha-cha and the West Coast Swing. Lucky members were learning from the "best" of the best, as their instructors were Arizona State Champions.

Members of the Model Railroad Club formed a sub-group focusing on the G Scale trains popular in outdoor garden railroads. Interested members each built a track table module, then joined it with other members' tables to create an extensive track layout.

The Westerners Square Dance Club celebrated its 20th anniversary with an Ice Cream and Hot Dog Social. Square Dance demonstrations were given.

General Manager R. G. Andersen-Wyckoff had asked Photography West members for pictures to decorate the Member Services Area of the R. H. Johnson Administration Building. Members held a contest called "Scenes of Sun City West" and nearly 50 prints were chosen for display in the newly remodeled Administration Building.

Coin and Stamp Club members used their knowledge and expertise to help local residents determine the approximate value of their coins and stamps. Called an "Approximation" service, it was free to Rec Center members.

2001

One more time! Western Horseshoe Club successfully defended its title at the Snowbird Horseshoe League Six-Team Playoff on March 20.

Friendly competition between Sun City and Sun City West continued as Sun City West Mini-Golf Club hosted the biannual Friendship Tournament between the two communities on April 28, at the R. H. Johnson course.

The Yoga Club was one of 50 groups from around the country included in an informational video produced by Wai Lana Yoga of California. Dottie Page and other members became yoga "Superstars."

Some more outstanding Westers included Shuffleboard West's Wilma Cory, who competed in Japan and Australia, and the Fitness Club's Jan Wilson, who was named Jazzercise International's "Top Instructor in the World." Seven members of Weavers West came home with 16 ribbons from the Maricopa County Fair.



Mailbox extensions are seen throughout Sun City West and are a popular product of the Metal Club. Tom O'Lear (above) came up with the idea for a craft fair in 1990. By 2002, 2500 of these boxes had been installed throughout the community. They are sold through the Village Store with proceeds going to the Metal Club. *Photo courtesy of Tom O'Lear*

2002

Shuffleboard West players were tickled pink (or was it green?) with their new green courts. The club was among some of the first clubs chartered in 1979, so repairs were welcome. Members were happy, too, that league play was making a comeback.

With the February opening of the Louisa Kellam Center for Women's Health at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, Model Railroad Club members got the chance to showcase their talent. Members erected an HO

scale layout with two model trains on a landscaped table at the hospital.

Senior Olympics Billiards came to R. H. Johnson Sports Pavilion on February 2 challenging local pros to show their stuff.

The Sun City West Lady Putters became the last club to be chartered in the community's first quarter-century. It started strong with more than 220 members.

Major Changes in Club Interest

For a seven month period in late 2001 and early 2002, residents renewing their Rec Cards were given a survey prepared by the Public Relations Committee of the Rec Centers Governing Board. More than 3,000 residents responded. Compared to a similar survey conducted by the Del Webb Corporation in 1991-1992, the results showed:

- ✧ Less interest in group participation, and more interest in individual activities, especially fitness and exercise. That finding paralleled the nation as a whole. Participation in chartered club activities dropped from about 59 percent to about 50 percent in a decade. Residents said they had less interest in dancing, bocce and crafts than they expressed ten years prior.
- ✧ A declining interest in both golf and bowling, though golf is still important.
- ✧ Continued high interest in theater, travel and music. Culture remains an important part of life for Sun City West residents.

While questions about computers were not included in 1991-1992, the newer survey showed that almost two-thirds of the residents owned a personal home computer, and virtually all of these computer users had Internet access.

Given the opportunity to list activities they'd like to see in coming years, residents named badminton, cooking classes, croquet, model building, roller-blading, an amateur radio club, reading and book discussions, and archery. Younger homeowners, many of whom continue to work at least part-time, called for more activities at night and longer opening hours for club and craft rooms.

Significantly, more than half the residents said they got good value for their annual dues money and for what they paid for golf or bowling.

The best evidence of the strength and vitality of club activity is that as the community nears the end of its first 25 years, the 101 chartered clubs have a total annual membership of nearly 29,000 members. That's an impressive figure for a city with a population of 30,000!

Chapter 15

A “Million Dollar” Variety Show

“Is There Any Talent Out There?”

Jerry Svendsen, vice president of public relations for DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company), was talking to Bill Friebolin in the Webb office on Bell Road one day in 1980. Svendsen had an idea for a talent show in Sun City West, but he had his doubts: “Do you think there’s enough talent out there?” he asked. Friebolin agreed to find out.

He and his wife, Marion, met with Bob and Bess Porterfield, Ray Orwat, and Ed and Dorothy Frome. This “Committee of Seven” discovered that there certainly was “enough talent out there,” and in six weeks they gathered 50 people, including singers, dancers and an accompanist. They selected music and set about handling the lighting, staging and publicity. The decision was made to open the event to residents of both Sun Cities, and to bill the event as a Sun Cities Holiday Variety Show. Free tickets were available from a booth at the Sun City West Arts and Crafts Fair and from a special table at the Sundial Recreation Center in Sun City. Finally, everything was ready for the BIG NIGHT.

Jerry Svendsen had programs printed, and, at 8pm on Nov. 19, 1980, eager residents seated in the Sundome awaited the start of the very first Variety Show. When Master of Ceremonies Bob Porterfield took the stage, however, he explained to the expectant crowd that there had been a slight mishap. Because of a misspelling in the program, this first Variety Show would have to be called a “VARITY” Show instead. Everyone had a good laugh, then settled down to watch as friends, neighbors and family members entertained them.

The very first – and last – “VARIETY” Show was a hit. Residents drove home that night, however, looking forward to future VARIETY Shows.

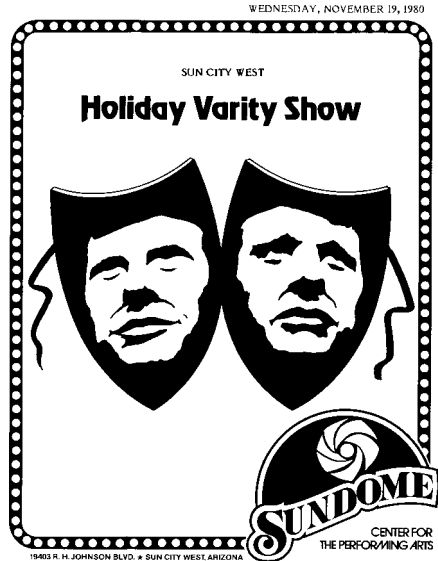
The Show Goes On

News travels fast. More than 6,000 people turned out for the second Holiday Variety Show on Nov. 11, 1981, in the Sundome. The Sun City Rhythm Ramblers, a guest orchestra, opened the 8pm show. The popular Westernaires Chorus returned for a second year. Soloists included Helen Alexander, Dale Wood, Thelma Young, Gus Sciortina, Joseph Waugh and Barbara Jordan. The Jazzercisers, Encore Round Dance Club and Westerners Square Dance Club danced up a storm, as did the dance team of Beatrice and Philip Schneider.

The Holiday Variety Show was fast establishing itself as a very popular annual event.

In 1982, the Rhythm Tappers, Nani Komohana Tutus (Hawaiian Dancers) and several soloists were added to the show. With home sales in a slump, the Webb Corporation did not underwrite the cost of the show; but Valley National Bank (now Bank One) came to its aid and offered much-needed financial assistance.

Many of the 1982 performers returned for the 4th Annual Holiday Variety Show in 1983. The Western Belles Barbershop Quartet was added to the line-up. Word was getting around that the Variety Show was the place to be seen.



Program cover from the first Holiday “Variety” Show, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 1980. The program included: soloists Kay Kendall and Kay Herzog, the Ted Dziubek Ensemble, Encore Round Dancers, the Westernaires Choral Group with soloist Helen Alexander, Westerners Square Dancers, Hillcrest Dance Club dancers Annetta and Jim Thomas, the Sun City Salon Ensemble and performers from Theatre West Productions doing various skits. It was the first in a long line of successful shows featuring local talent.



Although the 1981 variety show featured at least six vocalists, their voices, styles and selections were as different as the apparel worn by these two singers: 90-year-old Scottish tenor, Joseph Waugh and Barbara Jordan (a former radio and TV star known as Roxanne) who sang a Hawaiian medley. *November 1981 SCW Activities Calendar*

Something new was started with the 1984 show. Residents were asked to bring canned goods to the performance, and were told that these goods would be donated to the Salvation Army and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Admission was still free and tickets could be picked up at several locations. The local Valley National Bank distributed more than 2,100 free tickets *in just 3 days*.

The Shows Begin to Have a Theme

Directors Friebolin and Porterfield decided the 6th Annual Holiday Variety Show, in 1985, should have a theme to unify all the performances. They decided on a patriotic theme, "This is America." The highlight was a full-scale grand finale honoring the Red, White and Blue.

Joining many popular groups from the past were Frances Decker and her Sunshine Serenaders, the International Dancers, pianist Bill Fraley, and soloists Ada Koller, Anne Kirk, Loretta Roder, Anne Games and Virgil Lininger. Once again, more than 7,000 residents were in attendance.

Residents liked theme shows and so they continued. In 1986, Dick Howard and his stage crew built a huge cruise ship to support that year's theme: "We're Taking a Cruise." Tickets were still free and canned goods were still being collected. Show sponsors were the Webb organization, Valley National Bank and Arizona State University.

Variety Show Supports the New Hospital

With construction of the Sun Health Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital under way in 1987, the Variety Show Committee decided to charge



The ever-popular Rhythm Tappers danced their way to Brazil and Paris in following the theme of the 1986 variety show. *December 1986 SCW Activities Calendar*

a \$3.00 admission and donate the net proceeds to the hospital. Two performances were scheduled for the first time. With 8,209 in attendance, more than \$24,000 was collected for the purchase of equipment for the new hospital scheduled to open in January 1988.

Mike Tarr took over as the show's director in 1988, and got a fabulous performance from his cast using music from Broadway shows. The show was appropriately called, "West of Broadway."

Ticket prices increased to \$4.00 in 1989. More than \$42,000 was raised for general patient care equipment at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. The following year, 1990, ticket prices were raised again and three performances were given.

A retired professional dancer, Christopher Brown, directed the 1990 show, "Hurray for Hollywood." Brown had danced on the Perry Como Show, the Red Skelton Show, the Dinah Shore Show and in four Broadway shows, among his long list of professional credits. Finding himself in the new role of director, Brown reportedly beamed, "There is so much talent in this area." Brown's partner, Demetrius Vonglis, an award-winning costume designer, produced more than 200 costumes for "Hurray for Hollywood." Two such big talents didn't mind a little help from the community either. They appreciated and encouraged

groups of women who got together Friday and Monday evenings to stitch, sew and tie feathers on the costumes in preparation for the show.

It's amazing what you can get on a stage. "Westward Ho" was the theme of the 1991 show and what's the West without horses? Real, live horses, of course. So the crew drove a team of very real, very live horses onto the Sundome stage, making what many remember as an "unforgettable" performance.

Jeanne Tarr, talented wife of Mike Tarr, added her writing and directing abilities to the show in 1992. Jeanne, still very involved with the Variety Show more than 10 years later, enjoys auditioning acts in February and March of the year, deciding on a theme and "creating" a show.

Computer-generated orchestration was added to the show in 1993, as the Holiday Variety Show got ready to move into the electronic era.

As theme shows maintained their popularity, directors kept them coming. "Happiness is..." the 1994 show, honored the Phoenix Suns basketball team. In 1995, "Whee the People" saluted the military with 40 men and women vets on stage. And the 1998 show, "It's a Small World" wasn't so small after all – it had 250 performers, including six children and a dog!



Thousands of Sun City West residents have participated in the annual Variety Shows since the first show in 1980. The cast for this 1993 show had more than 200 singers, dancers and actors. Unseen were the many that worked behind the scene as costume designers, stage hands, lighting and sound technicians and more. *1994 Sun Cities Profile*

A Million Dollar Show

The 1998 Variety Show received Honorable Mention in the Sports and Entertainment category of the Western Maricopa Coalition (WESTMARC) “Best of the West” awards. The 2000 show, “Everything Old is New Again,” took First Place in the same category.

Most significantly, Variety Show performances had raised **more than \$1,000,000** for the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital by 2002.

Jerry Holstrom, Chairman of the 2002 Variety Show, noted the important contribution made by the participants. All are volunteers and pay for their own costumes. All donate their time and talent for the deserving cause of Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. Holstrom feels that Sun City West is fortunate to have so many highly talented residents who enjoy performing each year.

Jerry Svendsen’s question of so long ago – “Do you think there’s enough talent out there?” – has been answered in a spectacular way!

Chapter 16

The Importance of Volunteers

The “Can Do” spirit of the early, pioneer residents remains strong in Sun City West. Name a need, and residents willingly respond. In addition to the many volunteer opportunities within the community, residents can be found helping our neighbors by tutoring children at nearby schools, building homes for Habitat for Humanity, working at the Westside Food Bank, guiding tours at the West Valley Art Museum and in many other ways.

This chapter will focus on several volunteer organizations that have made our community a better, safer, more caring place in which to live: The PRIDES, the Posse, Sun Health Auxiliary and local chapters of international service clubs.

Part 1

The PRIDES... Particular Residents Involved Doing Environmental Services

While their new home was under construction in Sun City West, Joan Barnett and her husband lived in Sun City. Every day they would drive over to Sun City West to view the progress, and each time Joan would complain, “Sun City is so clean and Sun City West is so dirty!” After hearing enough of these complaints, Mr. Barnett finally said to his wife, “Why don’t you either shut up or do something about it?”

About the same time, Owen Moore and his wife were thinking about moving as the weeds were so bad, and the streets so unkempt appearing. Joan Barnett and Owen Moore were soon joined by Charlie

Czlapinski, Charles Barton and Howard Cain who shared a common concern.

Joan contacted Dr. Laurence Allen, who had run the Sun City PRIDES for a few years. One lengthy phone call with Dr. Allen, and the group had “all they needed to know.” They put an ad in the local newspaper announcing an organizational meeting for residents interested in keeping Sun City West clean. On March 8, 1982, forty-four people signed up at that meeting and the Sun City West PRIDES was born.

The timing couldn’t have been better. The County would only trim and weed the median strip along R. H. Johnson Boulevard twice a year. And, the trees between the sidewalk and walls were on community property, not county property. DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) was attempting to recruit volunteers from Sun City West master gardeners and the Garden Club to help with maintenance, but without much luck.

Getting right down to business, the new Sun City West PRIDES elected officers: Joan Barnett as President, Owen Moore as Secretary, Howard Cain as Treasurer, and Charles Barton as Membership Chairman. They began meeting at 9am Saturdays at Camino del Sol Shopping Center (now Sundome Plaza Shopping Center). DEVCO donated shovels, a van and other equipment, and Maricopa County provided liability insurance, safety vests, hard hats, trash bags, safety cones and other items. Joan designed the Sun City West PRIDES’ logo, which members sewed on their jackets and caps. Their first attempts at “beautifying” Sun City West focused on the area around R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Spanish Garden Drive.



Members of the PRIDES organization learned about their Saturday cleanup duties in April 1982 from Joan Barnett, right, president of the new organization. *April 30, 1982 Daily News-Sun photo*

More than 70 residents helped at one of the first “cleanups” in March 1982. Sun City PRIDES pitched in, too.

The beautification project continued at a weekly pace and, when the higher temperatures and hotter days of summer set in, the PRIDES simply moved up their weekly work sessions to 6:30am. Members continued their 9am monthly meetings at R. H. Johnson Social Hall.

Much-Deserved Recognition

Beauty has its benefits. Residents and groups began taking notice of the PRIDES and their efforts, and donations -- financial and otherwise — started coming in. Sun City West Rotary Club, Green Leaf Landscaping and Cactus Country Nursery donated money and plants to the PRIDES’ beautification project at Bell and El Mirage roads.



The PRIDES maintain and care for the plant life along the community’s main thoroughfares. Early on a Saturday morning in 2001, (left to right) Fran Eron, Gale Wandro, Joe Williams and Ray Smith worked to correct a problem with the irrigation system.

Hillcrest Men’s Club, one of the PRIDES earliest supporters, contributed money and started a yearly Pancake Breakfast to honor the PRIDES. The Sundome Merchants Association provided them with free coffee and doughnuts the third Saturday of each month. The community would make sure their all-volunteer “cleanup crew” was well fed.

By the end of their first year in 1982, George Reeve, DEVCO president, was so impressed with the PRIDES and the Posse, that he wrote in his monthly column in the Sun City West “Activities Calendar”: “We have, without a doubt, the largest number of volunteers anywhere

who devote their time and effort to the causes they believe in. Whether it’s with a rake in hand, ensuring the beauty of the Sun Cities, or with

a badge on the shirt, protecting a lifestyle that has no rival, these are the individuals who make our community great.”

Maintaining the Beauty of Sun City West

In the spring of 1983, a new Sun City West entrance sign was erected at Bell Road and R. H. Johnson Boulevard, and the PRIDES would add it and its surrounding area to their growing maintenance beautification project.

To celebrate the PRIDES’ second anniversary in 1984, DEVCO President Fred Kuentz and Senior Vice President Tom Ryan presented the group with a second van, and the PRIDES was the featured “Club of the Month” in the March issue of the Sun City West “Activities Calendar.”

Safety of its members while they are beautifying the community had been a concern from the very start. In 1985, with almost 200 volunteer members, PRIDES President Owen Moore acknowledged this concern as he accepted a golf car valued at more than \$5,000 from DEVCO President Fred Kuentz. Moore said the golf car would be



The well-equipped PRIDES’ utility cars are housed in a garage behind the Community Services Building at Stardust and R. H. Johnson boulevards.

used as a safety vehicle to place cones and other safety items along work areas to protect workers from traffic.

Five years after its founding in 1982, the PRIDES' primary function was to maintain the landscaping and to pick up debris along R. H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards, and the outer periphery along Bell, El Mirage and Deer Valley roads. They were contributing over 13,000 hours of volunteer labor yearly.

As the PRIDES approached their 20th anniversary in March 2002, their membership included almost 300 volunteers. They had 22 utility cars, and an array of tools to help them in their beautification efforts. They still meet every Saturday, and for 1-1/2 hours beautify more than 22 miles of Sun City West roadways. The Sundome Merchants Association continues to provide free coffee and doughnuts, and the Mobil station at Camino del Sol and R. H. Johnson Boulevard furnishes gas for golf cars and power tools. Proceeds from PORA-sponsored bingo games provide welcome contributions, as do residents' donations.

Why, after 20 years, are the PRIDES still devoted to this beautification project? Joan Barnett, founder and first president of the Sun City West PRIDES, perhaps summed it up best in a 2002 interview when she asked, "Shouldn't people take pride in their community?" It's as simple as that!



Fred Hafner was one of the original Sun City West PRIDES and 20 years later is still working as a monitor every week. *April 8, 2002 Daily News-Sun*

Part 2

The Posse – “To Protect and Serve”

People everywhere need protection. Whether they live in big cities or little towns, well-established areas or newly developing ones — they need protection.

Sun City West was a newly developing area in October 1978. Unincorporated, it needed a source of protection. Maricopa County Sheriff Jerry Hill knew this. He also knew he didn't have enough manpower to protect it. Under state law, however, Hill was empowered to form a Posse.

John Macicak, Helen Brown and Wally Holda were among the first to buy homes in Sun City West in 1978. All three had been Sun City Posse members. Sheriff Hill contacted Macicak and asked him if he would start a Sun City West Posse. He agreed and asked Holda to help him with organization and recruitment.

Formation of the First Posse

The first challenge for Macicak and Holda was finding recruits. It meant going door to door, asking residents to join. It meant attending Newcomers' meetings, seeking recruits from among the newest arrivals. In some cases, it meant pursuing people so persistently that they finally joined. Holda hounded Neal Coffman so often that Coffman said he “finally joined the Posse just to get Wally Holda off my back.” Recruiting also meant holding organizational meetings. At the first one on March 21, 1979, Chairman Macicak let it be known that women were invited to join.

There also were start-up costs and legal matters to be resolved. Macicak turned to DEVCO for help and received a donation to pay for start-up costs, including 35 yellow jumpsuits. He also asked the Del Webb Corporation legal staff for help in drafting a Posse charter, and submitting it to the Arizona Corporation Commission for approval. On May 15, 1979, Macicak was advised that approval had been given, and the Sun City West Posse, Inc. was an official organization.

The intensive recruiting effort was resulting in an inflow of new members, and it was time to get organized. On June 26, 1979, the Posse's first Board of Directors was chosen. Elected to the nine-member board were John Macicak, Wally Holda, Anna Kolis, Dorothy

Blakeslee, Peter Black, Leon Cornell, Al Draper, Arthur Knapp and Viola Viglione. John Macicak was elected the first commander and served during 1979 and 1980.

The Posse determined its primary function was crime prevention. Objectives were set and included: maintaining peace, law and order in Sun City West; promoting good fellowship; and instilling good public spirit. By July 1979, bylaws were drafted with the help of the Webb legal staff and the Sun City Posse.

Preparing the First Posse

Training was crucial. Up until May 1979, Sgt. Blankenship of the Sheriff's office was the instructor. Sixteen of the original members were sworn in, received Red Cross Instructors training and in turn taught the rest of the Posse members cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid. Recruits taking second-man training (needed to serve as a Duty Officer) received firearms training from the Sun City Posse Rangemaster. Maricopa County sheriff's instructors and training officers gave final courses.

Posse members began round-the-clock patrols that were in constant contact with sheriff's deputies. Duty officers (DOs) served for one week at a time and were on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The first four DOs were Wally Holda, Neal Coffman, Peter Black and Ed Kamys.



Members of the Sun City West Posse gather around their new patrol car in the spring of 1980. Sanderson Ford in Phoenix provided the car, along with service and insurance, without charge until residents' contributions allowed the Posse to purchase it. The dealer then sold the car to the Posse at a used car price. *April 1980 SCW Activities Calendar*

It was a busy first year with continual training and organizing activities. Wally Holda's garage served as the first Posse "headquarters." Members used their own cars at their own expense and used their own CB radios for communication.

All the effort paid off and by the end of 1979, Sun City West had its very own 50-member, all-volunteer Posse.

Posse Services Grow Over the Years

The presence of Posse members circulating throughout the community has always been a reassuring sight, and a deterrent to crime. The Posse has played a key role in traffic control at the Sundome Performing Arts Center. It regularly receives requests to help stalled motorists, look for lost dogs, remove an occasional snake, and help

new residents find their way. As the force grew, other services were added.

In the summer of 1980, a Vacation Watch program was initiated for the benefit of residents who left town for extended periods. Posse members made the rounds of registered homes on a regular basis, checking windows, doors, garage doors and generally "keeping an eye on the place" while the homeowners were away. The Vacation Watch Program proved



Posse members regularly perform traffic control duties throughout the community. They're the people responsible for moving traffic in and out of the Sundome parking lots. Like Traffic Officer Bob Shaw and his crew in this June 1984 photo, they deserve as much applause as the Sundome performers. *June 1984 SCW Activities Calendar*

highly successful but Posse members were still using their own cars and golf cars. In early 1983, a golf car was purchased especially for this program.

February 1983 saw the addition of Home Security classes and Block Watch programs to teach residents how to help keep their homes and neighborhoods safe. Minutes count in an emergency so then-Commander Neal Coffman had the map of the community separated into

grids. This grid system enabled patrols to be dispatched where needed more quickly.

In 1986, flashing porch lights became a standard feature of new Sun City West homes allowing emergency services to quickly find the right address. It was also the year Search and Rescue (S&R) was begun. Joe Zilincar, a Posse member since 1980, handled S&R as well as traffic control.

In 1991, an "R.U.O.K." Program was begun. Individuals living alone who required a little extra attention were enrolled in the program. Once a day, a Posse member would call to see if everything was OK.

The following year, the Posse was awarded a "1,000 Points of Light" volunteer citation from President George Bush. This award was given to key organizations across the nation for the outstanding service and dedication provided by their volunteers.

More Space, More Equipment Needed

By the summer of 1981, Posse members no longer had to meet in Wally Holda's garage, or other members' garages and living rooms. Thanks to a donation from DEVCO, their headquarters became a 12-ft. x 60-ft. portable unit that had previously served as a temporary pro shop for the Stardust Golf Course. The unit was moved to the far north end of Dysart Road in the DEVCO construction yard, and was on loan to the Posse until a permanent headquarters could be established. Posse volunteers erected a carport-type cover for their fleet of two ve-



President Reagan was made an honorary Posse member in mid-1983. With the crime rate in the Sun Cities the lowest in the nation, the President paid a visit to the combined Posses of Sun City and Sun City West. Sun City Commander Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll (Sun City's first woman commander), welcomed Reagan and conferred honorary Posse membership on him. The President commended the Sun Cities' all volunteer Posses.

June 1983 SCW Activities Calendar

hicles. A community-wide fund drive raised money to equip the new headquarters.

In mid-1983, Commander Coffman contacted Sun City Posse Commander Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll, as they had ordered ten new patrol cars. The Sun City West Posse was in need of additional vehicles, and Barkdoll was pleased to share their good fortune with the Sun City West Posse, offering them an excellent price on four of the trade-in cars. This was but one example of the many ways the Sun City Posse helped its sister organization in its formative years.

Not only cars, but computers and newsletters were added to the 1983 Posse as it continued its growth. Commander Coffman purchased two Commodore computers, and Ginny Tillenga reorganized the computer group, later called Data Processing. "The Scanner," a Posse newsletter, was published by Coffman and typed by Al Draper. In August, DEVCO contributed \$12,000 to the Posse. The funds enabled the purchase of portable radios and accessories to be used by Posse members while on patrol, traffic duty, Vacation Watch and in the event of an emergency or medical alert.

The temporary building housing the headquarters was far from ideal and growing too small for the force, which now had 148 members. As a result, an effort to establish a permanent Posse Base Headquarters began. Commander Neal Coffman began negotiations with DEVCO President Fred Kuentz for a centrally located site. PORA was also seeking a site for a building to house various community services. In September 1983, Kuentz donated 3.6 acres on the southwest corner of Stardust and R. H. Johnson boulevards to PORA. It was decided that one acre would be set aside for Posse headquarters. It was an ideal location as it was centrally located within Sun City West. It also was on land that was higher than the surrounding area making it ideal for radio transmission. An agreement was worked out with the PORA Foundation whereby the Posse would pay one dollar a year for 99 years to lease the one-acre plot, and the agreement was officially signed on Dec. 5, 1985. The Posse assumed responsibility for raising funds for its own building.

During 1983, Lt. Bob Keller drew rough drafts for a Posse building design. After reviewing his ideas with others and some 20 revisions later, he had a viable plan for what was needed. A building committee consisting of Chairman Neal Coffman, Ted Lira and Keller selected Stover Associates of Phoenix as architects for a new Posse Headquar-

ters. A line of credit was arranged with the Valley National Bank of Arizona.

Local residents and businesses contributed generously to the building program. DEVCO agreed to provide construction at cost, and work on the new Posse headquarters began in March 1987. Moving day arrived in October. Posse members, accustomed to the cramped quarters of their former 60-ft. x 12-ft. trailer, could now spread out in their new 14,000-sq. ft. home. It included a radio dispatch room, briefing room, training room, large meeting room, officers' rooms, computer room, supply room, scheduling room and a receptionist area. Commander Burke Stout formally dedicated the building on November 12, 1987.

Commander Robert Laird made the final payment on the building in 1988. According to Laird, moving from the trailer to the new headquarters was like "moving from a tenement into a first class home."

In 1988, the many contributions of the Posse resulted in its being chosen "Posse of the Year" for the first time by the Maricopa County Sheriff's office.

The Posse Needs Women, Too

John Macicak, the Posse's first commander, had encouraged women to join the Posse right from the start.



In February 1983, "Pistol-packing grandma" Virginia Niekamp became the first female member of the Sun City West Posse qualified to be armed while on duty. Helen Brown was also gun-qualified, but had won her eligibility while with the Sun City Posse. Niekamp first handled a revolver six months previously, and earned qualification by attaining a range score of at least 250 out of a perfect 300. *Feb. 7, 1983 Daily News-Sun*

Like Macicak, Russell Hood, the 1991 commander, worked very hard to get women involved in Posse work. In just seven years, all the encouragement and hard work would pay off.

A “first” in Posse history occurred in 1998 when Nancy Cherry was chosen as the first female commander of the Sun City West Posse. Elected by her peers to the post after being a Posse member only three years, Nancy felt honored. She felt support from her community, too, which she said received her warmly and totally accepted her as a woman commander. Nancy liked speaking before community groups and especially women’s groups, where she would focus on personal security.

Nancy Cherry devoted 2,265 volunteer hours during her term as commander. After leaving this post, Nancy continued to do patrol duty and dispatching, and in 2002 chaired the Posse’s Annual Fund Drive.

The Posse in the 21st Century

Twenty-five years ago, many newcomers to Sun City West thought of the Posse as a “group of volunteers, picked by the Sheriff, riding on horseback into the setting sun in hot pursuit of horse thieves or bank robbers.” The frequently asked question was, “Where do you keep your horses?”

In 2002, the Sun City West Posse has a fleet of 15 patrol cars, 5 golf cars and a van. Its computer room and communications system are “state of the art.” Commander George White presides over 180 Posse members consisting of 155 men and 25 women, including 12 husband/wife couples. Seven former commanders, Neal Coffman, Gil Pantea, Norman Zadnoff, Abraham Cohen, Robert Ballew, and Nancy and Dick Cherry are still active in Posse work. Of the 13 original Posse members, Neal Coffman is the only remaining active member. He still puts in 400 to 500 hours a year on patrol duty and radar.

With the new millennium came another new program for the Posse. This time a youth training program, the first of its kind for the Sun City West Posse. Initiated by Patrice Barry of the Sun Cities Volunteer Placement Services, the program was designed to assist the Sun Cities Posse, as well as the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Department.

Teen-agers from El Mirage, Glendale, Peoria and Surprise were chosen to participate in the 4-week, 4-hour courses each Saturday. Courses included training in communications, traffic direction and

control, Posse/FBI interaction, CPR demonstrations and volunteer opportunities in Sun City West.

Today, Posse members patrol the streets 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They serve a minimum of 20 hours a month (most serve many more), buy their uniforms, and must reside in Sun City West ten months out of the year. Since the Posse's inception in 1979, its all-volunteer force has donated more than 1,500,000 hours. Had this service been contracted out, or performed by Maricopa County, taxes would have increased substantially. The Posse not only saves residents millions of dollars, but also ensures that Sun City West residents benefit from one of the lowest per-capita crime rates in the United States.

The Posse has truly delivered on its mission to "Protect and Serve."

Part 3

Sun Health Auxiliary

The opening of Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in January 1988 created opportunities and need for volunteers. Sun Health, the parent organization, already had an active volunteer group, the Sun Health Auxiliary, well established in the northwest Valley. In fact, auxiliary volunteers from Boswell Memorial Hospital already had been providing a blood-pressure reading service in Sun City West for several years.

With the new hospital came the need for volunteers for the information and reception desks, family waiting areas, offices, mailroom, library and more. Volunteers staffed the gift shop and, outside, volunteers operated the courtesy cars in the parking lot.

Later in 1988, a thrift shop was opened in the Sun City West Community Services Building at R. H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards. This was a joint operation with the Sun City West Foundation with the auxiliary providing the staff, and the foundation supplying the space and utilities. Revenues are split between the two organizations. Since its founding, the Thrift Shop has raised more than \$1,500,000 for the two organizations.

In 2000, a Sun Health consignment shop named ConsignMint was opened in the Mercado del Sol Shopping Center. This, too, is staffed by volunteers and has a paid manager. Volunteers drive the truck



Three Sun Health volunteers ready the Thrift Shop for its opening in October 1988. It soon became, and remains today, a popular spot for bargain-hunters. *November 1988 SCW Activities Calendar*

that provides pickup and delivery of fine, gently used furnishings and other treasures.

The expansion of the hospital and the opening of the Louisa Kellam Center for Women's Health in February 2002 created additional volunteer opportunities. Among the most sought after were new positions in The Nesting Place Obstetrical Suites, where babies could be held, rocked and lavished with attention.

A Child Development Center opened on the hospital campus in the summer of 2002 to provide

child care for employees. This is expected to help in recruiting staff as well as make the hospital a more caring environment for staff and patients — and it provides one more opportunity for volunteers.

The Sun Health Auxiliary has grown over the years to more than 3,700 volunteers, making it one of the largest hospital auxiliaries in the nation. Twelve hundred of these volunteers are Sun City West residents, and by the end of 2001, they had contributed more than one million hours of service to Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. In addition, the auxiliary has raised more than \$5,500,000 in the Sun Cities for necessary medical equipment and supplies at the two hospitals.

Like the PRIDES and the Posse, the volunteers of Sun Health Auxiliary help reduce the cost of living as well as add to the quality of life in Sun City West, making it a more attractive community in which to live.

Part 4

Local Chapters of International Service Organizations

Sun City West Pioneer Lions Club

As ground was being broken in early 1978 and before residents began moving in, the subject of organizing a Lions Club in the new community was being discussed at a Sun City Lions Foundation meeting. It was decided that this new Lions Club would move to Sun City West as soon as enough homes were built and occupied. Tom Clews, past international director, and Dick Borchert, past president of the Sundowners Club, (the founding club), were instrumental in starting the new organization.

Members of several Lions Clubs in Sun City were persuaded to move their membership to form this new club. The accommodating Sun City Lions were promised that for each new member brought into the Sun City West Club after the first of the year, one of the founding members could transfer back to his former club in Sun City. This unique procedure enabled the Lions Club to be the first service club in the new community.

On June 30, 1978, the new club was chartered as "The Lions Club of Sun City West," located in Sun City, AZ. There were 32 charter members and the first president was Chat Nielson. The new Lions



The Lions Club's first recycling started in October 1979 behind the Home Federal Savings Building at 19428 R. H. Johnson Boulevard. President Peter Strupp and Special Events Chairman Jack Bowers take the first donation of newspapers from Home Federal Savings office supervisor Susan Besancon. Oct. 23, 1979 *Daily News Sun*

met on Mondays at the Melody Lane Restaurant in Sun City (now Royal Cafe).

The club's first meeting in Sun City West was held on July 2, 1979, at the Crestview Restaurant, a popular meeting place in the early years. Shortly afterwards, the name was changed to "Sun City West Pioneer Lions Club." The Lions quickly got fund-raising activities under way, including waste paper collection and delivery of flowers and the Homeowners Directory.

Although only a few years old in 1981, the Pioneer Lions were soon busy organizing and sponsoring other clubs. That year saw them help start the Sunrise Lions Club and the Lioness Club, both of Sun City West.

When the LPGA Golf Tournament came to Hillcrest in 1981, DEVCO asked the Lions if they would like to sell tickets in advance and at the gate. Sixty-one Lions responded, selling more than 1,100 admissions packages and working almost 1,000 hours at the tournament. The Lions donated the proceeds to Recordings for the Blind, Recreational Readings for the Blind and Camp Tatiyee, an Arizona summer camp for the handicapped and a state Lions project.

By 1984, the Lions were servicing the paper bin on a daily basis. They were making more than 1,100 flower deliveries on Mother's Day and Easter, netting more than \$1,800. Their "Journey for Sight," begun a few years earlier, continued to be a successful fundraiser. All three Lions Clubs of Sun City West joined with the Lionesses and residents in a walking-jogging-golf car parade from the Sundome to Sundome Plaza. Pledges provided funds for the blind and sight-impaired.

Newspaper collections for the 1984-85 club year raised \$13,694. The Lions paid the airfare expenses for a blind person to attend school and to obtain a Leader Dog. And they began another fund-raiser — delivery of the *Sun Life* Magazine.

In the mid-1980s, the Lions addressed the problem of drugs in the schools by establishing the Lions Quest Program in the Dysart District schools. Part of an international youth training program, it was designed to build the self-esteem of youth.

While working hard on various community projects (for example, collecting more than 1,000 pair of glasses yearly for the Sight and Hearing Foundation), the Lions didn't neglect their own club functions. In a 1989 letter, Lions President Jack Yeager commended his members for their achievements including being the No. 1 Club in

District 21A five times during their nine-year history. The club had also been recognized for the high percentage of members attending Club, District, Multiple District and International Lions functions. The year ended on an even sweeter note when Lions mint sales were added as a fundraiser.

By the early 1990s the club's main fund-raising projects continued to be collection of paper and glass; mint sale; delivery of *Sun Life* Magazine, Yellow Pages, flyers, and flowers; White Cane Days; silent auction raffles; and pancake breakfasts. During the 1991-92 club year, the Pioneer Lions volunteered more than 9,000 hours of community service - an all time record.

Sun City West Lioness Club

On October 3, 1980, an organizational meeting was held at the Great American Bank (formerly Home Federal Savings and Loan). Bank Manager Art Clementz, (Past District Governor of District 21A), and officers Harold Bidwell, Al Humphrey and Peter Strupp were there, as were other interested Lions and 30 women, mostly wives of Lions. Lion Ray Born's wife, Helen, was elected President Pro-Tem. Helen was a past president of the Aberdeen, Maryland, Lioness Club.

As the Pioneer Lions Club sponsored the Sun City West Lionesses, it was only fitting that the Lions plan the Lioness' Charter Luncheon, too. And so they did, and held it at the Crestview Restaurant on January 26, 1981. New officers were installed and 42 officers and members were inducted. The Pioneer Lions then donated a banner, gong and gavel to the new Lionesses. With their "Certificate of Organization" from Lions International, the Sun City West Lioness Club became official.

Lionesses devoted many hours to volunteer service. Interfaith Services, Sun City West Library, Boswell Memorial Hospital, Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, Residents Gallery of Sun City and the Dysart Community Center were some of the places Lionesses served their community.

They contributed to many worthy causes at the local, state and national level. Bake sales, arts and crafts shows, helping organize craft shows in Sundome Plaza, luncheon/fashion shows, deliveries of flyers, magazines and directories, and monitoring at golf tournaments were just a few of the ways the Lionesses raised funds. By 1995, the total raised exceeded \$67,000. They didn't forget the Lions who got

them started and Lionesses assisted the Lions during White Cane Days, pancake breakfasts, Hot Dog Days and delivering flowers.

Membership peaked in 1986 with 111 names listed in the year-book.

Past presidents recalled some of the Lionesses memorable fund-raisers.

President Helen Born recalled that during her term the Sundome Plaza Merchants Association gave the Lionesses the opportunity to deliver flyers to the 3,500-4,000 residents of Sun City West. Lionesses were paid \$400 that DEVCO subsidized. President Born also recalled that Senator Barry Goldwater provided the Lionesses with a flag that had flown over the United States Capitol.

President Naomi Wortman recalled a Kachina doll fund-raiser that was a success, as well as the Lionesses' first time at sponsoring a "Picnic in the Park" at Beardsley Park.

President Elaine Smith remembered her Lionesses making a "lot of money" in a project with Robinson's-May department store the summer its store opened in Arrowhead Mall.

The Lionesses joined the Council of Service Clubs during President Lenore Forti's term in 1991-1992. They raised \$10,000 for charities, including Camp Tatiyee.

In 1992 Lions International phased out recognition of Lioness Clubs. Women were allowed to become Lions and join the Lions Club. The district meetings and international conventions no longer held special events for women.

The Sun City West Lioness Club decided to continue to meet as a Lioness Club, instead of joining their sponsoring Lions Club. The Pioneer Lions Club accepted this decision and the two organizations continued to participate in money-raising events.

Members enjoyed monthly luncheons at the Crestview Restaurant until it closed in the summer of 1995. The club moved to the Juke Box Cafe on Bell Road in Surprise for a breakfast buffet that continued through May 1996. In October of 1996, the Lionesses moved to the Quail Room at the Community Services Building for luncheon meetings served by a caterer.

Although membership began to decline, the club continued making substantial contributions. They supported Lions International projects such as Leader Dogs for the Blind and Melvin Jones Memorial Park near Safford, Ariz., which honors the founder of the Lions Club. State projects included Camp Tatiyee, Lions Foundation of Ari-

zona, and Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation. Local charities included Sun City West Interfaith Health Care Center, Westside Food Bank, Sun Health Hospice Care Services, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Sun City West Community Fund, and Dysart Community Center. From 1994 through 1998, a total of \$37,500 was donated.

With the declining membership, it became increasingly difficult to fill all of the offices required to maintain the Club. The Sun City West Lioness Club voted to disband as of June 1, 2001. Several members joined the Pioneer Lions Club, and others have continued assisting the Pioneer Club with major projects, such as the deliveries of *Sun Life* Magazine, Pancake Day and Halloweenie Day.

Sundome Lions Club

This club was chartered on June 13, 1983. Stanley S. Stobierski served two years as the first president of the club. Working with other Lions and Lioness Clubs in Sun City West, the Sundome Lions Club members take their turn operating the recycling project behind the Safeway Store, participating in White Cane Day, helping produce luminaries for Christmas Eve, and helping deliver *Sun Life* Magazines. Among the special projects of this club is one to provide \$40 Christmas Gift Certificates redeemable at Safeway to 50 needy families in neighboring areas.

In 2002, with only ten members on their membership roll, they assisted at the recycling bins every Thursday, and served as managers for the *Sun Life* Magazine distribution. The Sundome Lions Club meets year-round on the second and fourth Wednesday at the Old Country Buffet at 79th Avenue and Bell Road in Glendale.

Sun City West Sunrise Lions Club

On April 9, 1981, this club was registered as a member of Lions Club International. Its first meeting was held September 3 at the Crestview Restaurant with Jack Bowers as president. As of July 2002, four charter members were still active: Arnold Haugsby, Bob Ingersoll, Jerry Sachs and John Spaulding.

With a motto of "We Serve," members keep busy on projects to raise money for the many charitable organizations they support. In cooperation with the Pioneer and Sundome Lions Clubs, they operate the paper recycling center at the rear of Sundome Plaza, distribute *Sun Life* Magazines, and participate in the preparation and selling of

luminaria. They also ring bells for the Salvation Army and sell Fannie May candy in December to benefit Camp Tatiyee.

A workshop to refurbish donated bicycles was started in 1997 after Lion Barbara Dienes donated her late husband's bicycle to a local elementary school through the Lions Club. In three years, more than 70 bikes were refurbished in the club workshop. Since having a bicycle for transportation can help someone get a job, the club makes bikes available to adults as well as children.

Other charities to which they contribute include: Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation, Leader Dogs for the Blind, Habitat for Humanity, Westside Food Bank, Salvation Army, Interfaith Community Care, Sun Sounds Radio, Sun City West Posse, Freedoms Foundation, Sun Cities Area Transit, Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, and the New Life Center for Abused Women and Children. Over a five-year period they contributed more than \$62,000.

Sun City West Rotary Club

This club was chartered on Dec. 31, 1981. Sam Arnold, a banker, became the club's first president. For many years, the club met at noon each Friday at the Crestview Restaurant. When this closed, the club moved to the Community Services Building and had lunches catered. One of the club's first projects was the planting of cacti and succulents on the embankments at the east entrance to Sun City West at Beardsley and El Mirage roads.

In 1989, the club began admitting women. This helped increase membership, and two of them, Marion Giell and Gina Griesman, would serve as presidents.

In October 1994, the Sun City West Rotary Club Foundation was incorporated through the efforts of Sam Arnold, John Coleman and Charlie Lieder. Later changed to an Endowment Fund, its purpose was to provide funding for scholarships for Dysart School students and donations to local charitable organizations.

In January 2000, the club adopted the West Valley Child Crisis Center as a new project. To raise money for it, the local chapter participated with others in holding a Charity golf tournament at the Falcon Dunes Golf Course. This event raised \$10,000 in 2001 and \$12,500 in 2002. With a membership of about 80, the club continues to fulfill its motto of "Service Above Self."

Kiwanis Club of Sun City West

Kiwanis International chartered the club on Nov. 28, 1979, with 30 active members. Robert C. Ketterson was the charter president. The club met each Tuesday at the Crestview Restaurant until it closed in 1988. The meeting place then moved to the Community Services Building where it has remained since.

Community service and youth programs have always been the primary thrust of the Kiwanis organization. In 1981, the local chapter began an annual Yard Sale, held each October, and the year-round collection of aluminum cans. These projects grew along with the population of Sun City West, yielding from \$3,000 to nearly \$30,000 a year. In 1997, the yard sale had grown to such proportions that the aging membership could no longer cope with this labor-intensive project. It was replaced with the sale of See's Candy in December of each year.

Originally, Kiwanis Clubs could not have women as club members. To get around this, the wives of members organized the Kiwanianne Club in 1984. They initiated their own service project, mainly with youth. In 1987, the Kiwanis International constitution was changed, allowing women to join local Kiwanis Clubs, and the Kiwanianne Clubs were gradually phased out.

By 1985, membership had grown to nearly 100 members, and the need for another Kiwanis Club became apparent. This led to the sponsoring of the Kiwanis Club of Sun City West-Ocotillo.

Over the years, the original Kiwanis Club has supported many youth projects. Labor and financial support was provided for the construction of "Kamp Kiwanis" near Gallup, New Mexico, for physically disabled and mentally retarded youth. Each year, the club supports the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership program providing opportunities for outstanding high school sophomores to attend a two-week seminar. In addition, the club has provided scholarship funding to deserving Dysart High School graduates. Currently, the club provides scholarships for 12 students at \$1,700 per year. Club members are also actively involved in mentoring students, and providing workshops in jewelry making, woodworking and electrical power. At the pre-school and kindergarten level, members are involved in the national "Reading Is Fundamental" program to encourage reading. Other members volunteer for the Laubach Reading Program at the Dysart Community Center, helping teach English to adults whose primary language is Spanish. Many other volunteer and service opportunities are available, and the contributions of this club are truly international in scope.

More than 360 individuals have belonged to this club since its chartering in 1979. One charter member, James J. Maley, remains an active member. Membership has remained fairly constant at about 100 since 1985.

Kiwanis Club of Sun City West – Ocotillo

Fifteen men came together to organize this club on June 24, 1986. Paul Thompson served as the first president. In 1991, women were invited to join and by 2002, the club had approximately 35 members.

The Kiwanis motto, “We Build,” means building better futures for the people they serve. An annual pancake breakfast is one of the ways the club raises funds for projects. These have included working with the Nadaburg School in Wittman on a “Reading is Fundamental” program, scholarships for students, and uniforms and shoes for a boys group in Avondale.

The club meets each Thursday morning for breakfast at the Briarwood Country Club in Sun City West.

Chapter 17

A Desire to be Involved

While living in a master-planned community, the residents weren't content to leave all the planning to the Del Webb Corporation. They wanted to be involved in the decision-making as it affected their future. DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) knew that at some point its work would be complete, and that the community would eventually have to manage on its own. As a result, the residents and the developer began seeking ways to work together and to share some of the decision-making for the recreational facilities. It wasn't always a smooth relationship, but it was a necessary step in the growth of the new community.

Since Maricopa County would be responsible for many of the municipal services once the development was complete, residents realized they would need an organized means of dealing with the county. They also found that the local school district had a major impact on their taxes, and quickly took steps to be involved in its decision-making process.

Part 1 reports on the impact the school district has had in uniting residents in a common cause. Part 2 covers the transition process that took place in the management of the recreational facilities.

Part 1

School Issues Arouse the Community

Although the Property Owners & Residents Association's (PORA) major functions are now municipal in nature, its origin had little to do with city government. It was established in the late 1970s to challenge a school bond issue that residents believed would raise their taxes unfairly.

Meet PORA's First President

When Colonel Gene Wilson retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1958, he wasn't done working. He soon took a position with the Defense Department where he analyzed expenses and negotiated the reimbursement of millions of dollars from NASA. Gene retired for the second time in 1973.

Gene and his wife, Marcella, bought their first home in Sun City in 1973. Golfing was very important to the Wilsons and was one of the reasons they selected that community. At the time, the courses were not owned by the Rec Centers, and were open to the public. That fact, combined with frequent tournaments, often made it difficult to acquire tee times.



Gene Wilson

Gene and several of his friends considered purchasing property to build a private golf course and country club. But just at that time, plans were announced for Sun City West. The Wilsons learned that the golf courses in the new community would be owned by the Rec Centers, and with the exceptions of Hillcrest and a private golf club, would be limited to residents.

As a result, the Wilsons sold their Sun City home and moved into the new community in November 1978, becoming the fourth couple to do so. The Wilsons would move again in 1981 to their present home on Paintbrush Drive. In 1979, Marcella Wilson was elected president of the Ladies Golf Association.

On a golf outing with some friends, Gene learned about a

bond issue that was to be proposed to the voters in June 1978, by the county board of supervisors. Realizing the Dysart Unified School District included Sun City West, he decided to give the bond issue a closer look. After investigating, Gene learned the school taxes in the Dysart School District were among the county's highest at that time. The biggest concern was approval of the \$27.75 million bonding capacity for future building as it would commit future Sun City West residents to repaying their share. With the help of about 20 Sun City residents with backgrounds in all aspects of education, documents on school spending and accounting were prepared. These findings were brought to the attention of school officials. It became apparent to the 20 residents that an organization was needed to speak with "one voice" on behalf of the community to address issues such as this. As a result, it was decided to form an incorporated, non-profit association that became the Property Owners and Residents Association, or PORA.

Wilson served as PORA's first president, spending 50 to 60 hours each week working on the betterment of Sun City West. Under his leadership, the \$27-million bond issue was rescinded and the first steps were taken toward removing Sun City West from the Dysart School District.

In December 1979, seven hundred PORA members petitioned Wilson to seek re-election as president. Wilson turned them down. On December 18, 1979, a Daily News-Sun editorial stated: "Certainly Wilson must feel great pride and appreciation for the tremendous compliment paid him by his neighbors through their petition. It said a lot for their confidence in him as an individual and as a commentary upon his contribution in what so often is an unappreciated public service role." The editorial also said, "Certainly Wilson is correct in his implication that PORA need not rely upon one source when many alternatives are available and that an infusion of new thinking at the board level should have a beneficial result in the end. His healthy approach merits a healthy applause."

The area in which Sun City West was being built was in the Dysart School District. Some Sun City residents who were planning to move to the new community became upset when they discovered that the school district had passed a \$27.7 million bond issue before they had a chance to vote on it. Years before, Sun City had been de-annexed from the local school district, and residents benefited from lower taxes as a result.

"We realized then that it would take one coordinated voice to resolve future issues like this," said Gene Wilson, one of the earliest Sun City West residents. So in March 1979, he, Irma Halfter and William F. Stewart formed PORA as an incorporated, non-profit association. Wilson was the group's first president.

The following November 1979, four Sun City West residents were elected to the Dysart School District Board and soon rescinded the \$27.7 bond issue.

De-annexation from Dysart School District

In order to avoid defeat of future school funding issues, the Dysart School District Board scheduled an election in May 1981 to de-annex most of Sun City West from the school district. The de-annexation proposal needed voter approval in two separate elections, one by Sun City West residents and the other by residents of the district outside Sun City West.

It passed in Sun City West 2,044 to 176; it also passed in the remainder of the district, 362 to 138. Although there were 1,855 registered voters in the district outside Sun City West, only 500 of them bothered to go to the polls.

The de-annexation resulted in a unique configuration for Sun City West's central area. DEVCO had set aside a large tract of land in the very center of the commercial district for a future regional shopping mall, and this remained in the school district. This was done to give the district a commercial tax base that would partially make up for the lost tax revenue from the de-annexation of the residential areas. This area was bounded by Camino del Sol, Meeker and R. H. Johnson boulevards, and included the strip on the west side of Camino del Sol from Spanish Garden Drive to Meeker Boulevard.

But the shopping mall was never built, and in its place DEVCO constructed 170 Sandridge casitas. Because the area was not included in the de-annexation proposal, those residents pay Dysart school taxes. So also do the many commercial ventures surrounding Sandridge, such

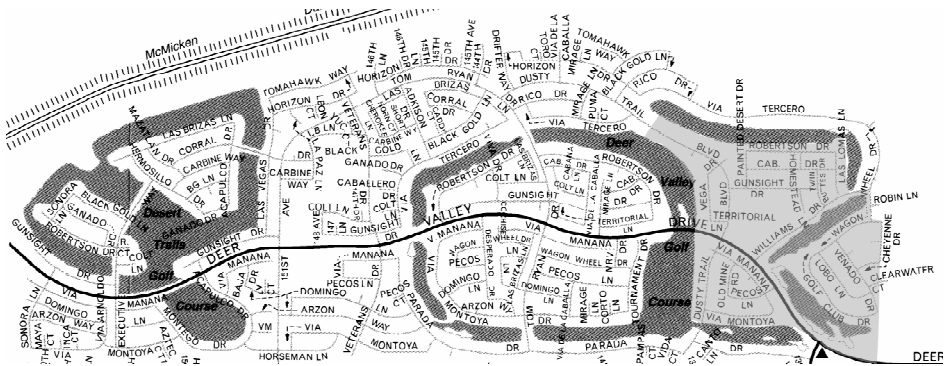
as Wells Fargo Bank (R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino Del Sol) and Osco Drug (R. H. Johnson and Meeker boulevards). On the other hand, the entire Sundome Shopping Center is not in the school district, and neither are the Sun City West Library, R. H. Johnson Recreation Center or ASU's Sundome Center for the Performing Arts.

“PORA's main thrust in those early years was to protect the people from unwanted and unwarranted school and county taxes,” according to Gene Wilson, PORA's first president.

As time passed, PORA concentrated more on performing municipal functions for its residents. These are described in more detail in Chapter 23.

Expansion Area Residents Fight School Tax

The school issue, however, returned to the limelight as a result of the Del Webb Corporation's purchase of the “Expansion Area” in 1992. This area of about 1,300 acres lay north of the original Deer Valley Road, and adjacent to the original Sun City West. Since this area had not been part of Sun City West during the de-annexation vote of 1981, it remained part of the Dysart Unified School District with the exception of a small portion that lay in the Peoria School District.



Map of the Expansion Area. The lightly shaded area at right lies within the Peoria School District. The remainder is part of the Dysart School District.

In March 1995, the Dysart District Board put a \$25 million bond on the ballot. As in 1979, the residents questioned the need for this and felt it was being brought to a vote at a time when the Expansion Area's small population couldn't adversely affect its passage. But the

seniors, whose small number turned out in force, voted it down. They had discovered that their tax rate was three times that of residents in the original de-annexed area, and their total property taxes were about double.

The following month, Citizens for Tax Equity (CTE) was founded to fight bond issues that the district continued to push using what residents felt were completely unfounded enrollment projections. For example, the district claimed school enrollment would increase to 24,000 students within “five to ten years.” In actuality, it increased only moderately, and in 2002 stood at less than 7,000. A large number of charter schools in Surprise, El Mirage and adjacent areas helped hold down the district’s enrollment.

Expansion-area seniors voted down a total of three bond issues and two overrides before September 1997, when CTE began soliciting signatures on petitions to place a de-annexation question on the ballot for the expansion area. “All we want is fairness,” said CTE President Robert W. Koch, a former Washington D.C. attorney. “We want to pay the same taxes as the original Sun City West.”

CTE also noted that a proposed plan for the state to pay for school construction would make issuing school construction bonds unnecessary. Approving bonds requested at that time would saddle property owners with interest payments for years ahead, CTE pointed out. The state did take over school construction funding soon afterward through formation of the School Facilities Board. That Board administers the Students First Program that pays for all school construction and repairs.

CTE asked PORA to support its de-annexation efforts, but then PORA president, Ed Cirillo, said PORA couldn’t get involved in an issue that affected only one area of the community. The PORA Board never voted on the request. As in 1981, both expansion area residents and residents of the remainder of the Dysart School District had to vote in favor for de-annexation to pass. The latter group, however, voted against the proposal in March 1998 and the expansion area remains a part of the school district.

Sun City West Residents Take Control of Dysart School Board

In November 1997, three CTE members were elected to the school board: Eleanor R. Nelson, Rose Parker and Bob Koch. Immediately, school board meetings turned into emotional shouting matches, where parents and employees accused the new board members of caring more

about their desire for de-annexation than about the welfare of the children.

CTE was successful in getting Pamela Justice, a 12-year Dysart board veteran, recalled, and Nancy Harrower was elected in that 1998 recall election. Later Leonard Guy won election to a vacant seat on the board, and by January 1999 all Dysart School Board members were from Sun City West.

The new board members began to straighten out district finances so that many programs that had been cancelled by the former board, like athletics, could be reinstated. They also spearheaded a shake-up in the district's administration, appointing Assistant Superintendent Margo Olivares-Seck to replace Superintendent Jesus de la Garza. Several administrators, principals and teachers were also replaced.

As parents and teachers began to see improvements in the district, some of the resentment and criticism of the new board evaporated. But in 1999, representatives of the Arizona Hispanic Community Forum criticized the district for what it called an exodus of Hispanic teachers, principals and other employees from the district. No formal action, however, was ever taken by any state or federal agency.

The new board helped obtain millions of dollars in state money and land donations from developers for new schools. It also helped organize a partnership with the city of Surprise to share resources, including computer software and a library at one of the schools. The middle school program was dropped, and students now attend elementary school through the eighth grade. More than \$2 million was spent to implement new programs to boost student achievement.

The board hired a consultant to study the mushrooming population within the district and the impact this would have on the need for future schools and equipment. With detailed demographic data in hand, the board was able to explain the need for additional funding and to encourage a vote in favor of an override that would allow taxes to be hiked higher than state law would otherwise allow. In May 2000, residents within the school district agreed, passing the override election by a 2-1 ratio.

Parker and Nelson chose not to seek re-election in 2000, and were replaced by Sun City West resident Doris N. Flax and Surprise resident Diana Bass. Koch, Harrower and Guy resigned from the board in July 2001 over concerns about Luke Air Force Base jets in the vicinity of Dysart Elementary School and High School. The three had wanted the two schools relocated to an area outside Luke's accident-

potential zone, and resigned after the Arizona School Facilities Board first agreed, then refused to relocate it.

By 2002 there were no longer any Sun City West residents on the Dysart School Board, and no bond issues or overrides on the horizon. Sun City West residents continued to volunteer in the schools, donate computers to students and give to the school district through a state program that allows them to donate \$250 per household to the district and deduct that amount from their state income taxes.

By 2002, hundreds of new families had moved into El Mirage and Surprise with no ties to the past controversy. Hispanic residents who had been vocal in their criticism of school district operation saw improvements being made and controversy between seniors and parents became minimal, if not completely resolved.

Part 2

Formation of the Recreation Centers Board

This group of individuals is featured in the local newspaper in almost every issue. Sometimes the coverage is favorable; sometimes it's not. They are elected by residents and responsible for managing the recreational amenities for the community. They are the members of the Governing Board of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc. When people first started moving into Sun City West 25 years ago, they did not exist. Today, the board oversees the amenities that set Sun City West apart from all other active adult communities. The transition from developer-control to resident-control of the recreational facilities is an important part of Sun City West history.

Chartering of the Association

On Aug. 28, 1979, the Arizona Corporation Commission issued a charter to the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc. establishing a non-profit corporation to acquire, construct, manage and maintain property for the benefit of the residents of Sun City West.

The Articles of Incorporation specified that the Del E Webb Development Company (DEVCO) would manage this organization commonly referred to as the "Association," for the first 18 months (or until March 1, 1981). Three DEVCO executives, President John Meeker, Executive Vice President Joseph Aubin, and Chief Legal Counsel Gerald

Williams comprised the incorporating Governing Board. After March 1, 1981, and when the Association became self-supporting, management would be turned over to a nine-member Board of Directors elected by residents.

Residents Seek A Say in Rec Centers Decisions

As more and more people moved into Sun City West, they wanted to know more about the future plans for the community and wanted to participate in shaping these plans. Growing concern and speculation about the control, management and eventual turnover of the Recreation Centers to residents culminated in a community meeting between DEVCO and Sun City West residents.

On Oct. 10, 1980, approximately 3,000 residents assembled in the Sundome for that session. DEVCO President John Meeker updated them regarding the Recreation Centers and the timetable for future development. An open forum followed to enable residents to air their concerns. A second community meeting was scheduled for November at which time DEVCO officials would outline the options available to residents regarding the turnover of the Rec Centers. Those attending would vote on the course of action to be taken.

On Nov. 21, 1980, more than 900 people listened intently as Meeker explained three proposals offered by the DEVCO Governing Board to the residents regarding the turnover of the Rec Centers. The first two proposals retained DEVCO management of the facilities while the third held to the original turnover date of March 1, 1981. Voting to retain DEVCO management were 892 residents; 39 favored abiding by the original turnover date.

With DEVCO management retained, a second vote was needed to decide whether it would be for a one-year period, or until the Rec Centers were at a break-even point. Residents favored the latter. DEVCO's proposals also called for the establishment of an advisory committee to be elected from among Sun City West Rec Center members.

This nine-member committee would consult with the DEVCO Governing Board and serve as a communications link with the resident membership. Meeker asked anyone wishing to serve on the advisory committee to submit a resume of qualifications and background in 200 words or less. These would be posted and an election would be scheduled for January 1981.

First Advisory Board Elected

Twenty candidates submitted resumes, and on Jan. 27, 1981, the election of the first Rec Center Advisory Board took place. Residents were asked to vote for nine candidates. The three with the greatest number of votes would be elected to three-year terms; the fourth, fifth and sixth highest would serve two-year terms; and the seventh, eighth and ninth would serve a 1-year term. This provided staggered terms of office so at least three board members would be elected in each subsequent year.

Cy Meusey was the Officer-in-Charge, and he and the Friends of the Library conducted the election.

Elected for:

<u>Three-year terms</u>	<u>Two-year terms</u>	<u>One-year term</u>
Hogan Dunlevy	William Dahms	Fred J. Langan
William F. Stewart	Sylvia Lustig	James P. Murphy
Robert W. Williams	Stan C. Stanley	William Rogers

These new Advisory Board members would work with the DEVCO Governing Board. Their goal was to become familiar with how policies relating to Rec Center operations were established. They would provide broad policy guidance for the management of the Rec Centers, but had no decision-making authority.

Bob Williams, a member of that very first Advisory Board, confirmed this “advisory only capacity” in a 2002 interview. “We only advised the [DEVCO] Governing Board,” recalled Williams. “It wasn’t a very dramatic period, but we laid the groundwork for the day when residents would elect their own Governing Board.” In a 2001 interview, Hogan Dunlevy recalled his tenure on the Governing Board and his close working relationship with Williams: “He’d help me, I’d help him. That’s the way we operated,” said Dunlevy.

At an April 29, 1981 open forum, Meeker praised the newly elected Advisory Board: “We look forward to continuing work with the Board in developing management and financial policy for the Recreation Centers.” He also reminded residents that DEVCO would continue to subsidize the Recreation Centers operations until a break-even point was reached and residents took over operation. “It is our intention that, when residents assume full responsibility for managing the center, it will be financially sound and economically viable.” he said.

Meeker also pointed out that it was "...in the interests of the Webb Company, as well as of the residents of Sun City West that fees for the use of recreation facilities be kept at an absolute minimum."

The First Increase in Fees

Less than two months later, though, on June 11, 1981, the DEVCO Governing Board voted to increase fees effective July 1. Increases were necessary to offset the increased cost of labor, utilities and materials used by the Recreation Center. Fees were set at a level that should provide the break-even level (assuming no inflation) necessary for the Recreation Centers to be turned over to the community. Fee increases included all three divisions and the new rates were:

Annual Recreation Center membership	\$75.00 per person
Golf prepaid.....	\$399.00
Bowling	\$0.75 per line

At a general meeting at the Sundome in June, Bill Woodyard, general manager of the Recreation Center, outlined the 1981-82 budget. Afterwards, Woodyard, Meeker and members of the Advisory Board answered questions. Woodyard would continue as general manager until 1989, working closely with changing Governing Boards and Advisory Boards. In a 2002 interview, he reflected on the various Advisory Boards and said that he felt that he had "...a good working relationship with all the Advisory Boards."

Advisory Board Becomes Actively Involved

In June 1982, the Advisory Board and DEVCO Governing Board reached a compromise on a new budget. Annual membership fees would remain \$75 per person but a \$5 charge would be added to be placed in an escrow account called the Asset Replacement Fund (ARF). This fund would be used as operating capital and for replacement of equipment when residents had full responsibility for the Rec Center. The *Western Star*, a publication put out by the general manager, reported regularly on the growth of this fund.

The Advisory Board got another lesson in Rec Center management in October. With the agreement of the Governing Board, an attempt was made to reduce utility costs. Craft clubs that used electricity and

Meet the First Rec Center General Manager

Bill Woodyard retired as Brigadier General and Dean of Faculty at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, after 38 years of service. While chairman of the Chemistry Department at the Academy, Bill had an opportunity to spend a summer at Arizona State University in 1968. This gave him the chance to travel around the West Valley. Sun City was going strong at that time, so he requested brochures from the Del Webb Company.



Bill Woodyard

When it came time to retire late in 1978, Bill and his wife, Ruth, decided to try living in Sun City. It took Bill just five days to realize that retirement was not for him. Sun City West was just getting under way, so Bill approached DEVCO for a job. He became the first employee hired for the Rec Center, and served as general manager for ten years. It was a very exciting job, as Bill recalls, because he had a say in what went into the centers. DEVCO delegated a great deal of responsibility to Bill, and he found it easy to work with them and for them.

The Woodyards moved to Sun City West in September 1979. Bill recalls there was very little established here at that time and Bell Road was a dirt road. There were fewer than a thousand people living here. To help newcomers know what was happening, the Rec Center published the "Western Star" with Bill as editor. New residents had to take out Rec Center cards, and their names were published in the "Western Star" to introduce them to the community. Since the cards were numbered, they became the basis for keeping track of the actual number of residents.

Bill retired from the Recreation Centers in 1989. By that time, Sun City West had a Governing Board along with an Advisory Board overseeing the several Rec Centers. After working for 48 years, Bill felt it was time to fully retire. He did, however, return as interim general manager of the Recreation Centers for two six-month periods in 1994 and 1996, while the Governing Board looked for new general managers.

While Bill's working days were over, his volunteer days had just begun. He served on the Board of the Sun Health Corporation for 15 years. And, he was the Treasurer of the Operating Board for Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital for ten years.

After serving as a volunteer for many years, Bill now feels he has one of the most rewarding jobs he has ever had. He is Treasurer for the West Valley Habitat for Humanity. The job is very gratifying, as Habitat builds houses for people who can't afford them, and Bill has seen how these homes have turned lives around for many people. The local organization began in 1987 and has built 111 houses in the West Valley. It's a worthwhile organization and Bill is very proud to be part of it.

water provided by the Rec Center could only be open a maximum of 43 hours per week.

The reaction to additional fees and limiting club hours caused the Advisory Board to quickly learn that not all its decisions, however well intentioned, would be popular ones.

Two years later in 1984, the Governing Board approved a proposal that \$7 of the member's annual fee would be placed in the ARF. DEVCO agreed to contribute \$2 per Association member per year to the ARF until the fund had a balance of \$1.25 million.

In only five year's time, the ARF balance grew to \$627,816.98 (Sept. 30, 1987). The November 1987 issue of the *Western Star* reported to residents that the monies were invested in government securities, CDs, money market accounts and other low risk medium-yield securities. Expected worth by 1990 was projected to be in excess of \$1.2 million.

In May 1986, the Advisory Board began publishing its own monthly publication, the *ADVISOR*, to keep residents abreast of latest developments. Of note in the initial issue was this reminder to residents: "The Advisory Board advises the DEVCO Governing Board on all matters concerning the Rec Centers and this arrangement will continue until such time as Sun City West residents take full control of the Recreation Centers — *probably in 5-7 years.*"

In July 1987, Advisory Board President Bill Thomas announced the establishment of a Golf Course Reserve Fund, as well as a reserve fund for the Bowling Division.

Residents Continue to Vote for DEVCO

According to the 1980 Master Agreement between Del Webb and the Rec Centers, residents had to vote every two years whether to retain DEVCO to manage the Rec Centers. And each biennial election favored keeping DEVCO by a large margin. In November 1988, an election kit was again mailed to eligible voters. 99% of the mail-in ballots voted to retain DEVCO management.

In ten years, the community had grown considerably. By early 1989, there were 17,647 residents, and 9,272 homes. In terms of population and home sales, Sun City West was 70% complete. The February issue of the *Western Star* reported that "...with the current rate of home sales, Del Webb Corporation should complete construction of Sun City West in 5-7 years."

A Time of Transition

Joint board meetings, elections and open forums continued. At the October 1989 open forum, Steve O'Donnell, assistant general manager of the Recreation Centers introduced the subject: "TRANSITION – SOMETHING TO BE FEARED OR APPLAUDED?"

In early 1990, the Advisory Board adopted O'Donnell's master plan which outlined the transition process, and set a target of Jan. 1, 1993, for the Recreation Centers to be managed by Sun City West residents. A copy of the plan was placed in the R. H. Johnson Library for residents to study.

To prepare for transition, training and education of the Advisory Board became a priority. Monthly operational workshops were begun in 1989 with key topics presented by various Rec Centers department supervisors. Topics included computer capabilities, bowling operations, golf course maintenance and operations, library management and Rec Centers landscaping.

The Advisory Board formed a Transition Committee with Tom Cunningham (1990 Board President) and Virginia Ritson (a past Board President) as co-chairs. The Transition Committee established four key subcommittees: legal affairs, building and grounds, management and government relations. Ken Parker, DEVCO Governing Board president, praised the transition efforts, saying, "...the Advisory Board is watching, researching, listening, talking and planning for the future of Recreation Center SCW, Inc. And we like their style!"

The accounting system was modified to include depreciation, something past Advisory Boards had wanted, but the Webb Corp. had

opposed because of Webb subsidies. Tom Cunningham praised the depreciation schedule: "If we had waited until Webb's departure, I'm sure the process would have been very confusing for all of us. Now, we'll have two to three years of management experience to rely on when transition is effected."

At a May 17, 1990, Joint Board Meeting, the Advisory Board and Governing Board endorsed the first five-year budget forecast. Webb subsidies were stopping, and the Asset Replacement Fund had reached \$1.25 million. The following were fully self-sufficient: R. H. Johnson Center, Beardsley Park Recreation Center, Bowling Division, Pebblebrook, Stardust, Grandview and Echo Mesa Golf Courses. Recreation Centers membership had reached 18,968.

The Transition Is Completed

In December 1992, the Advisory Board met for the last time. As the new year began, it officially became the Governing Board. At its first meeting on Jan. 5, 1993, the new Governing Board elected as officers:

Al Spanjer	President
Virginia Smith	Secretary
Dick Gray	Treasurer

The Rec Centers were now firmly in Sun City West hands.

To learn how the Governing Board is structured, the role of the general manager, and how recreational amenities are managed and funded, refer to Chapter 22 in the section "Managing the Community's Affairs."

GROWTH OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Active Lifestyle attracted many to the Sun Cities. Keeping fit physically was important to the new residents, and regular exercise became an important part of their lives. But needs change as individuals age, and it became apparent early in the life of the new community that health care services were needed in addition to recreational and club activities.

This section examines the many fitness opportunities, medical facilities, human services and assisted living alternatives available in Sun City West.

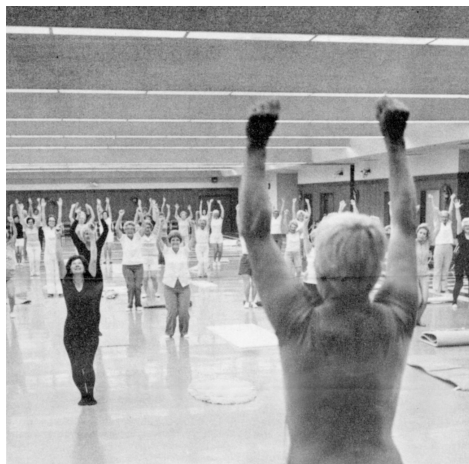
Chapter 18

The Importance of Fitness

As the “Baby Boomers” begin to reach retirement age, much is made of their interest in physical fitness. A look at the early days of Sun City West, however, reveals a similar interest a quarter-century ago. Fitness was, and remains, a key element in fulfilling Del Webb’s vision of “active retirement.”

“Be Fit For Life”

While the first annual Sun City Fitness Festival took place before many residents had moved into Sun City West, its second Fitness Festival in October 1979 found many Westers among the 500 participants in the three-month program. For an entry fee of \$5, residents could take part in guided exercises three times a week, attend lectures and join special events such as a community bike ride, a Sweetheart Walk-Jog on Valentine’s Day and Parcourse workouts. Exercise sessions were also offered for those in wheelchairs or with limited mobility. The “Be Fit For Life” theme encompassed everyone.



Jazzercise caught on like wildfire in Sun City West! The combination of music, dance, bending, stretching and jumping improves coordination, balance, flexibility, muscle tone, stamina and posture. This group met in the R. H. Johnson Social Hall Wednesday and Friday mornings in 1980. *May 1980 SCW Activities Calendar*

Four Fine Fitness Facilities

The first fitness center opened in the R. H. Johnson complex in June 1979. It was followed by fitness centers at Beardsley Park in 1985, Kuentz in 1987, and Palm Ridge in 1994. Each featured state-of-the-art fitness equipment, and each has been upgraded over the years. Treadmills are so popular they are scheduled separately. At Palm Ridge, the most used exercise room, more than 1,000 residents a day sign up to use the fitness equipment and about 280 use the treadmills, which are the single most heavily used item.



The Exercise Room at the R. H. Johnson Center was a popular spot from the day it opened its doors. Equipment in this January 1982 photo seems primitive compared to today's fitness facilities. *January 1982 SCW Activities Calendar*

Once a month, a Sun Health representative visits each fitness center to give instructions on proper use of the equipment and to answer questions. Many people have exercise routines worked out for them as a part of the Sun Health Advantage program.

The pools at the rec centers are popular gathering places for lap swimmers, as well as walkers. Exercising in water is easier on joints due to the body's buoyancy, and more healthful for aging bodies. Each rec center also offers a smaller pool called a "therapy pool" in the early facilities but now more commonly referred to as the "spa."

The Parcourse Challenge

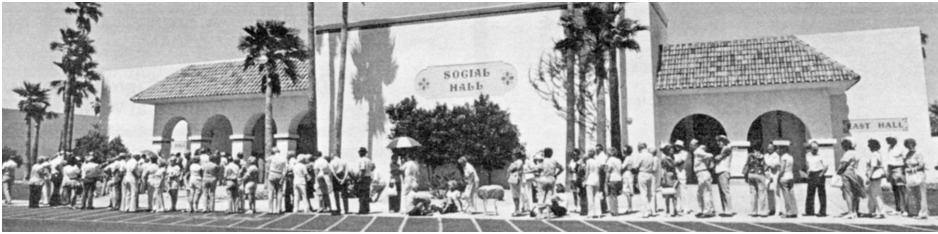
The 18 stations of the Parcourse Fitness Circuit, east of lawn bowling, at the R. H. Johnson Center look easy, but offer a variety of exercises to improve flexibility, muscle strength and tone and cardiovascular conditioning. Push-ups, chin-ups, swinging from rings, toe touching, sit-ups, balancing and jumping are just some of the challenges of the Parcourse. Each station includes instructions for starting par, sporting par and championship par.

Afterwards, a padded quarter-mile track provides a different challenge. Designed to help walkers set an even pace, the track has pacing lights at regular intervals around its perimeter. Pick a speed from a world class, four-minute mile to a leisurely 24-minute jog, and follow the corresponding light around the track.

Health Fairs

April 6-10, 1981, marked Sun City West's first participation as a designated site for the valley-wide Health Fair sponsored by KPNX-TV, Blue Cross-Blue Shield, Home Federal Savings and Loan, Samaritan Health Service and the Maricopa Foundation for Medical Care.

Health screenings conducted at the Fair included tests for blood pressure, pulse, visual acuity, glaucoma, hearing and skin cancer. An optional blood chemistry test that included 26 different analyses could be obtained for an additional \$7. Medical counseling and referral were also available.



According to Health Fair officials, R. H. Johnson Social Hall was the site of the largest turnout in the Valley of the Sun. More than 3,000 valley residents, most from the Sun Cities, took advantage of the four-day activity in early 1982. *May 1982 SCW Activities Calendar*

Arizona Senior Olympics

DEVCO was one of the major corporate sponsors of the Arizona Senior Olympics held in the greater Phoenix area. While events took place throughout the valley, several were slated for Sun City West. In February 1984, the bicycle competition was held here, and offered three-, six- and 12-mile courses.

In February 1986, the Arizona Senior Olympics consisted of more than 50 events ranging from swimming and track to fencing and table tennis. That year, three major events were hosted in Sun City West –

lawn bowling, golf and road racing. Lawn bowling competition went throughout the week. The golf event took place at the Hillcrest Golf Course with double shotgun starts at 8am and 12:30pm. Road racing consisted of 5K, 10K and half marathon runs, plus a 5K-race walk.

Floyd Smithburg was a top medal winner in the Senior Olympics in 1987. He captured gold in the 1500-meter and 3000-meter runs, placed 5th in the 5000-meter run, and 5th in the triathlon held at Beardsley Park.

Handi-Capables Club

On March 27, 2001, a plaque was hung on the Beardsley Pool building to honor Sam Baressi, late founder of the Handi-Capables Club. Sam was only 19 when he lost both his legs at Iwo Jima. In the early 1980s, Sam and wife, Shirley, moved to Sun City West. At a parade for resident Robert Ode (then recently released after being held hostage for 444 days in Iran), Sam noted the many people in wheelchairs and became determined to start a club that would help residents with disabilities find a way to exercise, improving their mobility and lifestyle. After several appeals to the Rec Centers Governing Board, a charter was granted in August 1984 for the Handi-Capables Club. The Sun City West Foundation donated \$500 to help the club get started.

At the time, the only place available was the outdoor pool at the Johnson Center. With the opening of Beardsley Park in 1985, the club moved to the warmer, indoor environment. Club membership grew and in 1986, a conflict over leadership policies caused a group to leave and form an Arthritis Club.

Since 1989, therapist Dawn Mortellaro has been working with the club helping individuals with exercises and teaching spouses and volunteers how to provide proper assistance. A group of dedicated volunteers also comes to the pool on a regular basis to help individuals in and out of the pool, walk with them in water and to provide other services as needed.

The club currently meets at the Beardsley pool every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 9am to 10am. They also have four luncheon meetings a year. In July 2002, the club had 183 members.



Jack LaLanne at age 70 was a living example of how daily exercise and proper diet could preserve the vitality of the mind and the body. His wife, Elaine, joined him to open the May 1985 "Health & Fitness Week." *May 1985 SCW Activities Calendar*

"More Alive in '85"

Sun City West held its first Health & Fitness Week in May 1985. The star attraction was Jack LaLanne, the "King of Fitness." Having brought exercise into the home via television, Jack had become a key figure in the increasing interest in fitness nationwide. While 70 years old, the trim LaLanne looked like a man half that age.

Jack and his wife, Elaine, presented a 60-minute program on practical fitness and exercise as part of a

weeklong schedule of events. May had been declared "National Health & Fitness Month" by the President's Council on Health and Physical Fitness. In recognition of this important subject, DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company), along with a committee of resident volunteers, organized more than 15 fun and informative fitness-related events during the week.

The theme of the event was "More Alive in '85." The week began with a Fitness Parade featuring more than 25 community clubs and groups. Jack and Elaine joined the parade that started at Sundome Plaza and ended in the east parking lot of the R. H. Johnson Center. There, the LaLannes presented their outdoor fitness program as part of an entire fitness showcase complete with demonstrations of tennis, racquet ball, water exercise, jazzercise, lawn bowling, bocce and more. Entertainment was provided by the Hawaiian Dancers, Westernaires, Rhythm Tappers, Encore Round Dancers, Westerners Square Dancers and the Synchronized Swimmers. Mountain Bell Telephone Co. provided complimentary nutritious drinks.

Residents attending the showcase had the opportunity to register for a variety of events hosted throughout the week. These included five fitness lectures presented by local physicians and specialists, more than ten exercise workshops and the community's first Relay Team Triathlon. One hundred Westers formed 35 teams for the latter event

with one person walking or running two miles, another biking five miles and a third swimming six lengths of Beardsley Pool.

Health & Fitness Week was so popular, it was repeated March 17-21, 1986, with a new theme: “Be Fit For Life.” Exercise workshops were expanded to include energetic exercise, arthritis aquatic exercise, yoga, weight training, water exercise and a Parcourse Fitness Circuit workout. The Relay Team Triathlon completed the Fitness Week, and was followed by a special program of live entertainment at Beardsley Park.



The Sun City West Synchronettes performed a water ballet routine entitled “Let Us Entertain You” at the opening showcase for the Health & Fitness Week in 1985. The group also hosted a workshop later in the week to interest others in this water art. *May 1985 SCW Activities Calendar*

Exercise Tailored to the Individual

Interest in exercise and fitness has long been a part of active adult life in the Sun Cities. For nearly three decades, Sun Health had been offering preventive care and health education. In 1995, Sun Health announced its “Advantage” program to provide individualized health and wellness benefits to adults.

This program provided individuals an annual full liquid panel laboratory screening, free of charge. For a small fee, they could also obtain a personal fitness assessment and an individualized fitness program. The fitness assessment involved measurement of ability in lung function, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscular strength, endurance, blood pressure, heart rate and body composition. Based on the results, Sun Health staff made recommendations on exercises and lifestyle changes that would result in a healthier body.

The Sun Health “Advantage” program also offered a quarterly newsletter, in-patient amenities and discounts at local merchants. It quickly proved popular, and more than 14,000 Sun City West residents have participated.

Chapter 19

Providing First-Class Medical Care

The First Sun City West Medical Center

In February 1981, plans for local medical office facilities moved ahead with the announcement that a 9.8-acre parcel between R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol and on the north side of Meeker Boulevard would be used for the Sun City West Medical Arts Facility. The complex was to be patterned after Sun City's Thunderbird Medical Arts Center.

A temporary building, used in Sun City prior to the completion of Boswell Hospital, was moved to Meeker Boulevard (about where the new Bashas' store is located) to house physicians' offices and examining rooms. When it opened in June 1981, it also provided space for a team of paramedics and the first local fire-fighting unit.



A familiar, reassuring sight to Sun City West residents is the 254-bed Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. First opened in 1988, the hospital underwent an expansion that more than doubled its size in 2001. The addition of a full-range of women's services makes the hospital fully responsive to the needs of the Northwest Valley's growing population. *Photo courtesy of Sun Health*



The new Sun City West Medical Building, 13902 Meeker Boulevard, housed physicians' offices, examining rooms, a Rural Metro fire fighting unit and an Associated Ambulance paramedic team. Shown in this early photo are (from left) fire fighters Ron Singleton and Joe Ray, receptionists Julie Strottman and Lois Treadway, nurse Cory Licata, manager Roy Anthes, and paramedics Doug Roth and Gene Godoy. *September 1981 SCW Activities Calendar*

Alan Miles, M.D., was reported to have treated the first resident to receive medical care in Sun City West. Dr. Miles had completed his residency in internal medicine in Detroit, Michigan, and joined a multi-specialty medical group in Sun City. He soon found himself working half the week in Sun City West in what he recalls as "a primitive, make-shift trailer."

Dr. Miles' colleagues included three pulmonary specialists, a cardiologist, a gastroenterologist and an allergist. They were available on a rotating basis from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

Within six months, the Arizona Department of Health Services granted the facility a license for the Sun City West Urgent Care Center. The facility thereby became an extension of Boswell Hospital's emergency care services. Urgent care was provided from 5pm to midnight weekdays and 9am to midnight on weekends and holidays.

The services offered by this temporary medical center continued to expand. By mid-1982, X-rays, computerized electrocardiograms, physi-

The Evolution of Sun Health

Sun Health's roots go back to the non-profit corporation formed in 1966 as the Sun City Community Hospital, Inc. Local people with outstanding leadership and talent were recruited and made members of the Board of Directors for this Corporation. Years of careful planning, design and construction followed; and in November 1970, Boswell Memorial Hospital opened with 60 beds.

On January 25, 1980, the name of the corporation was changed to Inter-Community Health Care of Arizona. A year later, the Board of Directors approved the establishment of a separate subsidiary corporation to accept a gift of land in Sun City West from DEVCO, and eventually to hold title to the health care facility which, it was anticipated, would be built on that land.



In February 1981, the board of directors called for a restructuring of the corporate organization. A single controlling corporation would be formed, and each unit would become a controlled subsidiary corporation. Under this new plan, Sun Health Corporation became official on April 3, 1981.

The new Sun Health Corporation elected its first board of directors in June: John R. (Jim) Mead, president; Leyton Woolf, vice president; Haakon Bang, secretary; John E. Durkee, treasurer; Catherine Northrup, assistant secretary; and Joseph Zwiser, assistant treasurer.

Up through 1986, Sun Health was the parent of its operating entities. Reorganization in December 1986 changed the parent/subsidiary relationship. The number of corporations was reduced from eight to three – Sun Health, Sun Health Properties and Sun Health Foundation – each a separate, independent, tax-exempt corporation.

Today, Sun Health remains a non-profit, local, community-based network of healthcare services providing acute, long-term, residential and home-delivered healthcare and related services to the Sun Cities and other western Maricopa County communities. Patients receive comprehensive, integrated health services through Boswell Memorial Hospital in Sun City, and the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in Sun City West.

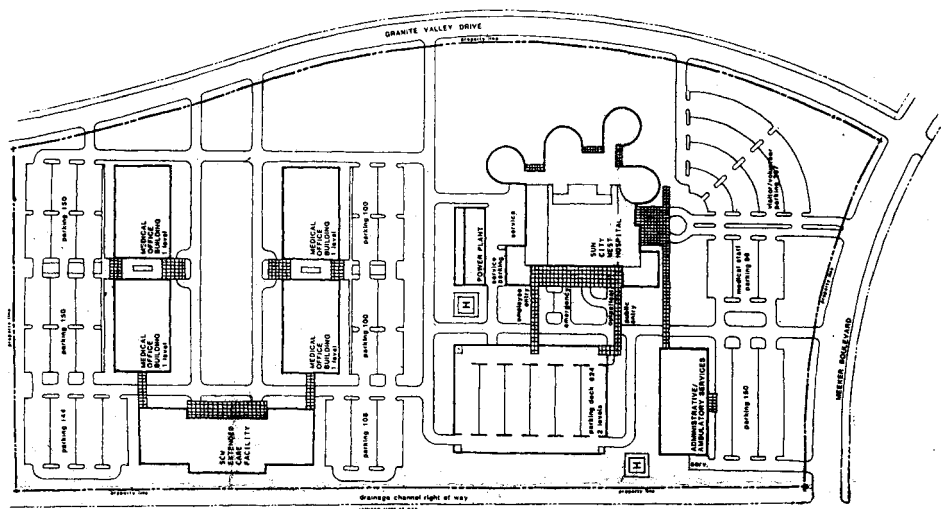
cal therapy and lab work were available on site. Specialists in ophthalmology and dermatology were added to the staff.

This "temporary" medical center served residents until the new hospital and surrounding medical offices were opened in 1988. In August 1984, the following physicians were listed as maintaining private practices in this facility:

- G John J. Brennan, M.D., orthopedics
- G Alfred J. Faber, M.D., family practice
- G Ronald S. Garlikov, M.D., ophthalmology
- G Joe T. Hayashi, M.D., general practice
- G Barry L. Stern, M.D., urology

Planning For A New Hospital

More than 10 years were invested in the planning of a hospital for Sun City West. By February 1979, a proposal was drawn up for a 120-bed hospital. Sun Health formulated the plan with the realization that Northwest Valley growth meant patient-care demands would eventually outstrip Boswell Memorial Hospital's capacity. A new hospital would require state approval.



Early master plan for the 120-bed hospital proposed for Sun City West.
Jan. 17, 1984 Daily News-Sun

Sun Health representatives took their case before the Central Arizona Health Systems Agency (CAHSA) in 1984. Although there was overwhelming evidence that Boswell Memorial Hospital's capacity would be exceeded even before completion of a hospital in Sun City West, and despite the strong support of local organizations, the CAHSA hearing board voted to deny the project by a narrow, 5-4 vote.

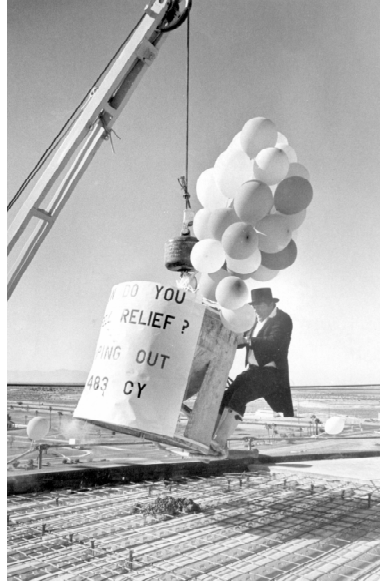
Undaunted, Sun Health continued efforts to bring a hospital to Sun City West. The Arizona Legislature let the state's certificate-of-need law expire in 1985. When that happened, CAHSA ceased to exist, and necessary permits finally were obtained.

On October 7, 1985, Sun Health broke ground for a new \$42-million hospital in Sun City West. Original plans called for the hospital to be named "Boswell West." However, in consideration of a \$3 million grant from the Del E. Webb Foundation and a portion of the land donated by the Del Webb Corporation, the new five-story, twin-tower healthcare center was named Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. Among those taking part in the ceremonies was baseball Hall of Fame member Mickey Mantle, a member of the powerhouse New York Yankees during the dynasty years when Mr. Webb was part owner of the American League team.

Open At Last!

A new era in health care dawned on January 4, 1988, when the first patient entered the sandy-colored twin towers of the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. William H. Thomas, a member of the non-profit hospital's board of directors, was the first patient admitted.

Unfortunately, just as the new hospital opened its doors, the federal government announced deep cuts in payments for treatment of Medicare patients. Ninety percent of the budget had been based on



"Topping off" the construction of the new Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital included special delivery of the last batch of concrete, along with a formally attired worker. The sign read, "How do you spell relief?" *Sun Cities Area Historical Society archives*

estimates of *increased* payments from Medicare. The federal cuts caused a deficit of more than \$1-million the first year. The news got worse as Medicare announced changes in its reimbursements for hospitals' capital expenditures, adding another \$1-million to the deficit. There was good news, though. During the two-year construction period, a community capital campaign had raised \$6-million to add to the Del E. Webb Foundation's \$3-million grant.

From the beginning, the new hospital stood tall, not only as a landmark visible for miles around, but also as a landmark in the field of medical technology. One of its unique features was the Flexible Use Laminar Flow System that provided specially treated air to the operating room. The equipment filtered the air 180 times an hour and circulated it in a horizontal flow, rather than in a rotary fashion, to decrease the chance of particles entering an incision or wound.

In recognition of special community needs, planning for the new hospital also included the introduction of the West Valley's first inpatient, critical-care, and medical/psychiatric program. This treated the cognitively impaired, as well as those suffering from acute depression and/or anxiety.

Busy From the Beginning

During its first year, the hospital admitted 1,363 patients for a total of 12,219 patient care days – an average stay of seven days. The full service, 24-hour emergency department treated 3,799 patients. A total of 553 surgeries were performed, 85,601 tests were processed by the clinical lab and 63,718 meals were served. More than 38,000 volunteer hours were donated and \$1-million in cash contributions was received plus more in pledges. Almost 200 residents, employees and health enthusiasts took part in the hospital's first "Race to Health" 10K Run. A 24-hour telephone "COPE" Line was established to provide counseling and assistance with emotional emergencies. A Meals on Wheels program was started using volunteers to deliver well-balanced meals from the hospital kitchen to local residents who were unable to prepare their own.

As Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital began its second year, two new services were added. An extended care center was opened on the hospital's first anniversary to help patients ease the transition from acute hospital care to home. The program was so successful that the facility was doubled to 55 beds. Also in January, a 275-volume professional library was dedicated. The medical books donated by retired

doctors and medical staff members, along with \$30,000 in pledged support, enhanced the continuing medical education of the medical staff and patient-care personnel.

One of the major accomplishments in 1991 was the installation of the *Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS)*, in the Medical Imaging Department. Together with Boswell Memorial, the Sun Health facilities became the first hospitals in the world to fully integrate this pioneering technology. This computerization of digitized images allowed physicians to view internal anatomy as never before, revealing detail at various depths. Hundreds of these images can be stored on computer disks, lowering costs and giving instant retrieval. The \$2.2-million cost was funded entirely from donations to the Sun Health Foundation.

During 1990, the combined average *daily* census for the hospital and extended care center increased to 70.9 patients, with a record 101 patients reached one day in February. There were 2,456 admissions during the year, totaling 25,870 patient-care days for an average stay of 10.1 days. The year recorded 1,104 surgeries, 6,045 visits to the emergency department, 187,353 lab tests, and 112,024 meals served. The new Medical Imaging Department processed 15,069 images and 785 nuclear medicine scans.

Clearly, the hospital's phenomenal growth and demand in such a short time showed a remarkable bonding with the community. A study of admission statistics provided by the Arizona Department of Health Services in 1991 indicated that eight out of ten Sun Cities residents who required hospital care chose to be admitted to Boswell Hospital or Del E. Webb Hospital. In 1995, the accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick conducted a national study of 3,600 acute care facilities. Boswell Memorial Hospital was ranked as the nation's most cost-effective hospital and Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital placed second among hospitals of comparable size.

Doctors Drawn to the New Hospital

During the first year of operation, 230 physicians were granted admitting privileges at Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. In November 1991, the opening of the Granite Valley Medical Office Building brought 60 health-care provider tenants onto the hospital campus.

The first phase of a planned, three-phase Sun Health Del E. Webb Medical Plaza was completed in the fall of 1996. Many additional

physicians' offices and outpatient clinics were located there. The second phase was slated to open in 2003.

Responding to a Growing Population

The West Valley was experiencing rapid population growth by the turn of the century. Approximately 226,000 residents lived in the Sun Cities and the surrounding area, and it was estimated this would increase 40% over the next five years to more than 318,000. Clearly, a major expansion of the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital was needed.

Ground was broken on April 8, 2000, for an addition that doubled the size of the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. The two-year, \$46.5-million expansion project added 209,000-sq. ft. of new hospital space. Another 52,000-sq.ft. were renovated, and 14,000-sq. ft. were provided for physician office space.

The focal point of the project, the intergenerational Louisa Kellam Center for Women's Health, opened in February 2002 to serve the multiple healthcare needs of all area women. This included, for the first time in Sun Health's history, obstetrical care and services for newborn babies. The introduction of obstetrical services has a secondary benefit to women of all ages in that it has attracted additional gynecologists to the area.

The expansion included the addition of 80 new private acute-care beds, 12 new critical-care beds and conversion of semiprivate rooms to private rooms. The hospital's Emergency Department was increased from 15 to 23 beds, and urgent care services were added to reduce waiting times. By 2002, 450 physicians had been granted medical staff privileges at the expanded Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital.

On February 2, 2002, a date noted for its "twos" - 02/02/02 - the new Nesting Place Obstetrical Suites opened with a double de-



The spirit of youthful play is captured in the "Carefree Children" sculpture outside the entrance to the Louisa Kellam Center for Women's Health. This Glenna Goodacre sculpture was donated by Bob and Diane Roskamp.
Photo courtesy of Larry Carlino

livery—a set of twin boys. Less than four months later, the 100-baby mark was reached and surpassed with the birth of twin girls.

The Role of Sun Health Foundation

Hospitals in the Sun Health organization are expected to cover their operational costs, which is done in a number of ways. Medicare reimbursement is a major factor, although the reductions made by the federal government in 1997 have had a major impact on hospitals such as Del E. Webb Memorial where the majority of the patients are Medicare beneficiaries. In a multi-generational community, Medicare patients make up less than half the total. In the Sun Cities, the percentage is almost 90%. Because the amount Medicare pays is less than the actual cost of providing services, the shortfall is of great concern to both Boswell and Del E. Webb Memorial hospitals.

Sun Health Properties develops and manages medical office buildings around each of the hospitals. Profits from rentals flow back into Sun Health to help cover the operating losses of running the hospitals and get closer to break-even. These efforts, however, do not provide sufficient funds for all of the needed new and updated equipment and hospital additions.

Before Boswell Memorial Hospital was built, Sun City residents went door-to-door to solicit funds for the new building. When the hospital opened, a tax-exempt, non-profit foundation was formed to continue this fund-raising for facilities and equipment. In the mid 80s, the name was changed from the Boswell Hospital Foundation to



Twins Scott and Grant Kennedy were the first deliveries on Feb. 2, 2002 at the Nesting Place Obstetrical Suites in Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. Parents Marcus and Tammy Kennedy of Goodyear and brother Corey proudly display the new additions to their family. *Photo courtesy of Sun Health*

Sun Health Foundation to better reflect its support of all Sun Health hospitals and services.

The Foundation seeks to raise funds in many ways, working with a variety of other organizations and local residents. The annual Variety Show is perhaps the most visible fund-raising activity in Sun City West. Another is the annual golf tournament sponsored by cruise line Holland-America and hosted by Briarwood Country Club.

Twice a year, the Foundation sponsors a group tour. Eighty to 100 residents generally take advantage of the opportunity to visit places such as Hawaii, Panama Canal, Ireland/Iceland, Baltic Sea and more. Holland-America and the area's participating travel agents donate a portion of their proceeds to the Foundation.

Other local fund-raising activities include a gala ball at Briarwood Country Club on each fifth anniversary of Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, direct mail appeals, and advice and help with wills, charitable trusts and other forms of bequests. Funds may be directed to a specific project or hospital, as is the case with the Variety Show and other local activities.

Sun Health also counts on the support of the 3,700-member Sun Health Auxiliary, believed to be the largest hospital-volunteer organization in the nation. Since its founding, auxiliary members have provided more than eight million hours of service and raised more than \$4.5 million for Sun Health to use in purchasing needed medical equipment. The activities of the Sun Health Auxiliary members in Sun City West are described in more detail in Chapter 16 "The Importance of Volunteers."



The eighth annual Sun City West Variety Show (1987) was the first to charge admission, with tickets costing \$3. Proceeds were designated for the new hospital. By 2002, the annual shows had raised more than \$1 million to benefit Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. *October 1987 Hospital "Highlights" Newsletter*

Chapter 20

Human Services

The active lifestyle attracted many to the Sun Cities. But needs change as individuals age, and it became apparent early in the life of the new community that certain services were needed in addition to all the recreational and club activities. The Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA) saw a need for a central location for various volunteer community organizations, and formed the Sun City West Foundation to provide this. The aging of Sun City residents had revealed the need for services to help the elderly remain in their homes, and this would eventually be true of Sun City West as well. An inter-faith community organization was launched, providing an added dimension of care to those in need. This chapter will trace the history and growth of each of these organizations.

The Sun City West Foundation, Inc.

The concept of a center for volunteer community services surfaced among PORA officers in 1981. For one thing, there was a need for a local lending organization, as Sun City's Sunshine Service could not go on supplying the growing Sun City West forever. The Posse was operating out of a borrowed trailer in the DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) construction lot, and needed better quarters. One had only to look to Sun City to see the variety of service-oriented and charitable organizations that would need housing in the years to come.

Consequently, PORA began lobbying DEVCO for land in a convenient, central location. At the same time, PORA began laying plans to raise funds for a building to house these organizations.

A Chance to Win at Monte Carlo!

Fund-raising plans moved quickly, and the first Monte Carlo event was held in the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts in November 1981. It proved a huge success. A dollar bought \$200 worth of play money or two poker chips or two slot machine tokens. Bets could be placed on blackjack, roulette, Showdown Poker, craps, horse races and other games. Winnings were converted into tickets that were placed in a drawing for prizes at the end of the day. Top prize at first was the use of a new car for a year. As the event grew ever more popular, the car was given away. More than 250 other prizes donated by local merchants increased the chances of winning. In addition to gambling, entertainers performed and refreshments were available in the courtyard.

Running such an event was no simple task. Gaming equipment had to be rented and set up. State permits were required. Finding volunteers, however, proved not to be a problem.

By 1988, the Monte Carlo event had expanded to include bowling and golf tournaments, a pet show, luau and musical. Over the years, annual Monte Carlo fund-raisers contributed more than \$166,000 to the Sun City West Foundation.

In subsequent years, a decision was made to move the Monte Carlo event from November to February or March. While the timing captured more winter residents, there were too many other activities competing for attention, and interest declined. The last Monte Carlo was held in 1993.

Sun City Lends a Hand

The Lending Hands program, patterned after the popular Sun City Sunshine Service, opened for business in December 1982 at 17228 Dysart Road. DEVCO leased the space to the organization for \$1 a year. Sunshine Service not only provided counsel, but also donated equipment worth several thousand dollars to get the program started.

Evolution of the Sun City West Foundation

In September 1983, DEVCO President Fred Kuentz announced the donation of 3.63 acres at R.H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards for use by all the volunteer agencies in the community such as Lending Hands, the Posse and PRIDES. The donation carried three restric-

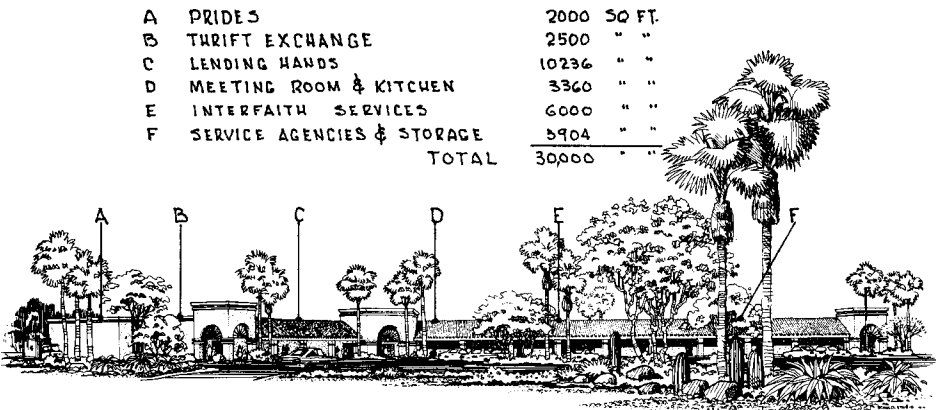


Lending Hands was lent a hand with this check for more than \$14,000 raised by the Monte Carlo event. Shown here are from left: Frank Starbuck, PORA treasurer; Bob Williams, Lending Hands president; and administrator Sig Sampson. *January 1983 SCW Activities Calendar*

tions. First, it would be deeded to PORA as the major civic organization and not to individual operating agencies such as Lending Hands or the Posse. Second, the land must always be used for charitable and educational programs for all the residents of Sun City West. Third, PORA must be represented in the overall structuring of the system.

An ad hoc committee was formed to plan how this might be accomplished. Representatives from virtually every major charitable activity in the community deliberated for four months, and came up with the recommendation that a tax-exempt PORA Foundation Inc. be formed to hold title to the property. The second restriction was written into the deed, and the third restriction was taken care of by establishing a Foundation Board of nine to 15 members, with the PORA Board electing the members of the Foundation Board annually. It was further stipulated that no more than three members of the PORA Board could serve at any one time on the Foundation Board.

Less than a year later, the Foundation name was changed to the Sun City West Foundation, with Bob Williams as president. Many



Early sketch of the planned Community Services Building showing space allotments for the various organizations.

credit Williams with the initial idea of a Community Services Building.

The initial plan for the new complex called for it to house Lending Hands, the PRIDES, a Thrift Shop, Interfaith Services Day Care Center, a kitchen and meeting room, the Salvation Army, Jewish Family Services and possibly some other agencies which did not yet exist. The Posse was deeded an acre of the parcel for a period of 99 years. They agreed to raise their own funds to design and construct a building to suit their needs.

Luminaria Light Up the Town

In 1985, Jerry and Lois Leigh came to PORA with an idea for Luminaries: small candles set in paper bags and placed along sidewalks and driveways. PORA provided \$500 in seed money, and the project received enthusiastic support. As the 1985 Holiday Season approached, the PORA Foundation announced the first Holiday Luminaria Festival with a goal of raising \$100,000 over the next three years for the Community Service Center project. More than 150 volunteers went door to door to invite residents to purchase a luminaria kit for \$4.25, consisting of ten candles, paper sacks and sand. These were to be placed along the sidewalk, and lit at 5:30pm Christmas Eve. The first year's endeavor involved the distribution of more than 115,000 candles and 26 tons of sand. The effort was worthwhile as it raised an estimated \$20,000. Originally assembled in a building on



El Mirage Road, luminaria production moved into remodeled space next to Helping Hands in 2001.

The New Community Services Building

On March 19, 1987, ground was broken for the first of four phases of the new Community Services Center. This provided 10,000-sq. ft. for Lending Hands at the southern end of the building and opened in August 1987. The second phase of 20,000-sq. ft. gave space for the PRIDES, Thrift Shop, meeting rooms, board room and Foundation offices. This was completed in February 1988.

Phases three and four were put on hold for almost three years while additional funds were raised. In October 1990, these last two phases were combined, and work began on the final 10,000-sq. ft. By the time the center was completed in April 1991, the \$1.3-million cost had all been paid. This was made possible by the popular Monte Carlo events, the Luminaria Program, a \$500,000 grant from the Del



The second year of the Luminaria Festival saw nearly 180,000 candles lighting up the streets of Sun City West on Christmas Eve, 1986. Volunteers filled kits with sand, 12 candles, 12 candle receptacles and 12 sacks. *December 1986 SCW Activities Calendar*

Webb Foundation, donations from residents, the sale of a cookbook and other fund-raising activities.

In September 2002, the Community Services Building was renamed the Robert M. and Norma B. Cameron Center in honor of the donors of a major bequest to the Sun City West Foundation. An open house and reception was held on Oct. 23, 2002 to honor the Camerons and their 55th wedding anniversary.

Meet the Foundation's First President



Robert Williams

Brigadier General Robert Williams retired in 1974 after serving in the Army for 30 years. Bob and his wife, Altamae (Jimmie to her friends), moved to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. After two years, they were fed up with “swatting bugs and flies” and decided there must be a better place to retire. In the summer of 1976, they headed for San Diego to look for that better place. Stopping in Tucson for a week, they found they liked the desert and drove on to Phoenix. That area appealed to

them so much that they purchased land in Scottsdale to build a home. After moving into their new home, they found Scottsdale wasn't the ideal location they had sought. The area lacked a good golf course, had few activities to join, and it was a five-mile trip to get a loaf of bread.

In the spring of 1978, the Del Webb Corporation started Sun City West. After driving over to check it out, Bob and Jimmie decided the new city offered all that they were looking for. They moved here in July 1979, the hottest summer that Bob can remember! One day when Bob was in the yard, a bicyclist approached him and introduced himself as Gene Wilson, President of the Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA). Bob remembers Gene telling him about PORA and making a comment that “It's very difficult to find Chiefs around here but there are plenty of Indians. Nobody wants to be Chief.” With a desire to serve in his community, Bob joined PORA and was put on the Health and Safety Committee.

Bob's interest in the community soon led to his becoming chairman of the committee involved in the Dysart School bond issue. After an extensive investigation, the committee set three goals: get the \$27.5 million bond authorization rescinded; place representatives from Sun City West on the Dysart School Board; and, call for a de-annexation election to separate the two parties on a permanent basis. By June 30, 1981, a year later, the committee had accomplished all three goals.

In 1981 Bob got very involved in fundraising, and came up with the idea for a Monte Carlo Night at the Sundome to raise money for the community. Proceeds from the first event were to be used to create a lending service similar to Sun City's Sunshine Service. Growth of the new community was fast out-stripping the Sun City organization's ability to serve both cities. The first Monte Carlo event raised \$14,500 for the new community service, named "Lending Hands."

Bob found many other outlets for his energy and leadership ability, serving on the Rec Center Advisory Board from 1981 to 1983, and on the PORA Board from 1981 to 1985. He served as president of PORA in 1983 and in 1985.

Currently, Bob is involved with the Phoenix Area Chapter of the Freedoms Foundation. The Freedoms Foundation objective is to educate succeeding generations to our nation's proud heritage. This is done in partnership with educators, parents and the national headquarters at Valley Forge, Penn. Programs are free to schools. All artists and speakers are volunteers. Of the 29 chapters nationwide, the Phoenix Chapter is the only one offering Living History programs. In the 2000-01 school year the chapter presented more than 300 programs to more than 24,000 students and 6,000 adults.

Bob was named Man of the Year in 1981 by the Daily News-Sun and he was State Representative, District 15 from 1989 to 1993. He has served his community in many capacities and has been honored numerous times.

From Lending Hands to Helping Hands

Demand for cribs, high chairs, strollers, roll-a-way beds, wheel chairs, hospital beds and other items grew as the community expanded. The space in the Community Services Center soon proved too small, and the Foundation built a new building across the street on land donated by DEVCO. This opened for business in May 1996. Lending Hands had never held fund raising events to avoid competing with the Foundation's efforts, but relied on donations from users to pay for expenses and equipment.

After several years, a strong feeling emerged among the Lending Hands volunteers that, since they raised the money that supported their work, they should be given title to the building. The request turned acrimonious and was not in the best interest of the community, so the Foundation shut down Lending Hands. The name was changed to Helping Hands, and it reopened with a new set of volunteers in April 1999.

Today, Helping Hands serves residents of both Sun City West and Sun City Grand.



Playpens and other children's items are among the most popular items borrowed from Helping Hands. More than 4,500 items are available for loan, and each year some 16,000 clients use this convenient, free service.

Interfaith Community Care

The active lifestyle, so important to the image of the Sun Cities, began to show some changes in the late 1970s for which no provision had been planned. A segment of the population was reaching a point at which residents needed a little assistance to be able to remain in their homes. They needed help with grocery shopping, with transportation for medical appointments and counseling to help solve the

problems they were encountering. In response, a Sun City Area Community Council was organized in January 1979 to identify the needs of the communities. Social services, a previously overlooked amenity for the Sun Cities area, were about to be formed.

Identifying Needed Services

When the Sun Cities Ministerial Association reported that the need for crisis counseling was far greater than the ministers in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown were able to handle, it was agreed that action must be taken. In March 1981, a joint meeting was called of members of the Ministerial Association, Sun City Area Community Council and representatives of local congregations. This led to the formation of a committee to examine the community needs and to determine the staff and facilities required to accommodate a crisis counseling program. William (Bill) Wolfrey, a retired U.S. Bureau of Budget management consultant, served as the first chairman of this committee.

One committee member, Muriel Rose, described her feelings at one of the early meetings in which the problems of the aging population were presented. "I saw that mountain of needs to be met, and I knew I wanted to climb that mountain." It was with this spirit and the support of dedicated persons such as Muriel, that plans were developed to conquer that mountain.

With the goal of helping the frail elderly remain in their own homes as long as possible, the committee identified three areas for attention: crisis counseling, day care centers and services to the homebound. After much planning and research, the Sun Cities Area Interfaith Services (Interfaith) was incorporated as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization on May 7, 1981. Muriel Rose suggested the name to convey that the organization represented many faiths and service organizations,

Letters were sent to local churches, Jewish congregations and service organizations inviting them to join Interfaith for an annual membership fee of \$25. Each member organization was asked to select two delegates to form a House of Delegates, which then would elect a Board of Directors to act as the governing body of the organization. The board would elect its officers and hire professional staff. A plan was drawn up to recruit and train volunteers. Based on the premise of "neighbors helping neighbors," the organization would dem-

onstrate how a community could care for its own. Bill Wolfrey was elected the first president.

The roll call at Interfaith's meeting, January 28, 1982, showed the first Sun City West delegates to be Charles Clikeman and Lloyd Kendall representing the Sun City West Pioneer Lions Club, and F. Lee Paul and David Busse from the Kiwanis Club of Sun City West. By April 1982, three Sun City West churches had joined: Episcopal Church of the Advent, Desert Palms United Presbyterian and Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist.

First Goal: Crisis Counseling

Because of the urgency of the need, the Board of Directors agreed to accept the offer of the Ministerial Association to assume the responsibility for crisis counseling. The clergy, in turn, arranged to contract for this service through Catholic Social Services, and in July 1981, crisis counseling became the first service available. Initially, it was offered three days a week in Sun City, but over the years it has grown to include more counselors and churches, and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To meet the growing need, the counseling program evolved into peer counseling using trained volunteers overseen by certified social workers. Most of the counseling is done in the home; for example, helping a spouse adjust to the loss of a loved one. The peer counselors are all seniors who have gone through similar experiences and are matched up accordingly.

The members of the original committee continued their planning and research, including investigating similar programs in other states. During 1982, more than 550 residents of Youngtown, Sun City and Sun City West were interviewed regarding long-term care issues. The survey was designed and supervised by the Arizona Long-Term Care Gerontology Center at the University of Arizona with the cooperation of the Sun City Area Community Council. Results indicated that almost 35 percent of the residents engaged in volunteer activity, averaging 5.58 hours of service per week. Volunteer labor represented a major resource in the Sun Cities area, making the prospects promising for a program of volunteer-based community care.

Second Goal: Adult Day Health Centers

The development of adult day health centers was the second area targeted by Interfaith. To plan this type of program, Holly Bohling, a professional social worker, was hired as activities director in July 1982. The first day centers opened in September 1982 in three locations in Sun City.



Volunteers provide one-on-one attention to Day Center participants. Here, Program Director Holly Bohling (back row, right) and two other volunteers help with a craft project.

Photo by Lu Urdang

The centers were planned to encourage socializing for persons who rarely left their homes, and to allow their caregivers time for personal respite. Services included therapeutic activity and exercise, educational activity, health care by a registered nurse, emotional support, transportation, hot lunches and snacks.

Only four to six people were expected to participate the first

month, but in two months 35 participants were enrolled. They paid \$15.00 per day, but no one was turned away for inability to pay the fee.

The completion of the Community Services Center in April 1992, provided space for an Adult Day Health Center in Sun City West. By 2002, five adult day health centers were available: the one in Sun City West; one at 81st Avenue and Cactus Road in Peoria; and three in Sun City — Royal Oaks, 10015 West Royal Oak Road, The Mary Bovard Center at 14600 Del Webb Boulevard and in St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church, 15800 Del Webb Boulevard.

A Senior Center was also started in the Center's Quail Room in early 1992. Initially, Interfaith provided social activities once a month including day trips, card games, educational programs and a meal. Over the years, this program has been expanded to once a week on Tuesdays. In 2002, planning began for a larger Senior Center, and

one that would be open more days a week. Several sites were examined and the Sun City West Foundation agreed to raise funds for an 8,000-sq. ft. building. Interfaith would take responsibility for managing the day-to-day operation.

Third Goal: Services to the Home-Bound

In addition to Adult Day Health Centers and a Senior Center, an increasing number of services have been offered to help the elderly remain in their homes. Among these are:

Home Care Assistance provides in-home care by a bonded and insured Interfaith employee who gives personal assistance in light housekeeping, personal care such as bathing and dressing, transportation and errands.

Health Watch is an emergency response system serviced by Interfaith for a monthly fee. Residents are given a desk-top console and a wearable transmitter that signals for help at the touch of a button, 24 hours a day.

Bridges is a comprehensive, private-care management program helping seniors with long-term care arrangements when they have no family nearby. A trained social worker and nurse assure that the client's needs are met and communicate with family members about the status of the client.

Caregiver Support provides an educational and caring support environment for people caring for loved ones with chronic health problems.

Peer Counseling is available for emotional support in personal issues.



Grocery shopping and transportation are two of the most frequently requested home services. Volunteers provide the legs and arms for those less able to negotiate the aisles of busy supermarkets, or who no longer feel comfortable driving.

Photo by Lu Urdang

Education Program offers a semimonthly, life-planning lecture series by local professionals.

Referral Programs allow an Intake Social Worker to refer individuals to Interfaith programs, as well as to outside programs and agencies that best meet that person's needs.

Home Services are provided by volunteers and include grocery shopping and delivery, transportation, simple home repairs, friendly visitors, phone pals and help with such things as balancing a checkbook.

A Growing Program Needs Additional Space

The number of residents coming to Interfaith for assistance grew from 264 in 1983 to 2,861 in 1987. Originally working out of a bedroom in a home in Hines Village (now Baptist Village) in Youngtown, the growing demand for services meant a need for better offices. Space was rented in the Valley View Professional Plaza on North 113th Avenue in April 1983. This provided for the secretaries, bookkeeper, receptionist and professional social workers that were being added to the staff. In November 1983, Robert Pangburn was named Executive Director.

When more office space was needed, the Del Webb Corporation offered Interfaith a furnished building on Dysart Road north of Bell Road. This building remained its headquarters until 1987 when the Webb organization offered them a larger, 7,400-sq. ft. building. It came with the stipulation that it must be moved by September 1987. Interfaith was successful in securing a lease for State land located one-half mile north of Bell Road on El Mirage Road.

A special fund-raising campaign was launched to raise not only the \$150,000 cost of the move, but additional operating costs for the rapidly increasing programs for the frail elderly. A bank loan was needed immediately to pay for moving the office building but Interfaith had nothing that was acceptable for collateral. Finally, an arrangement was worked out with dedicated persons signing notes guaranteeing payment to the bank if Interfaith failed to raise the funds.

The building was moved and DEVCO employees finished the interior of the building with most of the furnishings coming from the Webb organization. Volunteers installed thirty phone connections inside the building. Connections to utility lines had to be made under El Mirage Road into Sun City West to connect to lines on Conquistador Drive. Fortunately, these connecting lines crossed lots belonging to

Maurice Street, a member of Interfaith's Board, and his neighbors, Lloyd and Theo Graham. Maurice saw that the lots were made available for this important connection, and also made sure the yards were restored to their original condition.

The building housed a reception area, staff offices, conference rooms, secretarial space, a small kitchen and an office rented to Habitat for Humanity in 2000. An adjacent building, previously used for Luminaria production by the Sun City West Foundation, was given to Interfaith for storage and maintenance work.

A Record of Achievement

Interfaith soon became a model for communities across the nation. Bill Wolfrey, the founding president, was invited to address the National Council on Aging's Annual Meeting in 1985 in Washington, D. C. Barbara Sharkey, coordinator for home services, and John Hasemier told of the success of Interfaith at the National Council on the Aging in Chicago, March 30, 1987.

By 1989, approximately 30% of the counseling clients resided in Sun City West, and another 30% resided in Phase 2 of Sun City. More than 6,500 home visits were being made each year. The staff was making as many as 212 individual contacts a day, totaling more than 71,000 contacts each year.

Growth of services in the next decade was phenomenal. In 2001, the Home Services program provided grocery shopping and delivery for 3,523 clients, 12,000 transportation trips and 711 minor in-home repairs, at little or no charge. Twice as many persons were served through Community Intervention Service in 2001 as in 2000 and the number of requests continues to grow. These come from families with emergency financial needs. Interfaith works to find available funding sources.

Executive Director Bob Pangburn retired in September 2001. Michelle Dionisio was appointed Interim Executive Director until September 2002 when she was made Executive Director. In 2002, the name of the organization was changed to Interfaith Community Care.

By 2002, there were approximately 500 fully trained volunteers providing assistance to the 21 members of the professional staff, and bringing life to the Interfaith mission: "Support Services for Independent Home Living." Michelle Dionisio reported 42.6 percent of the volunteers were from Sun City West. They provided a total of 9,175

hours of service in 2001. There were 4,500 clients in Sun City West that year.

Funds for Interfaith's services come from local donations. They are rightly proud of the fact that general and administrative expenses are held to ten percent. Ninety percent of the funds raised go to program support.

Interfaith Community Care, the primary Sun Cities area social services organization, is an important community amenity; supervised by professionals, assisted by dedicated volunteers and greatly appreciated by the residents of Sun City West.

Chapter 21

Assisted Living and Extended Care

The active lifestyle attracted many to the Sun Cities. But the needs of individuals change as they age. There comes a time when independence becomes less desirable and caring for a house begins to be a burden. Sun City West, however, has become “home,” and there are many advantages to remaining among friends and familiar surroundings.

Early in the development of Sun City West, residents became concerned with the lack of assisted living and long-term care facilities. The Del Webb Corporation was not positioned to provide them as its emphasis was on traditional single-family homes. Others in the health-care field, however, were beginning to look more closely at the new community.

One person who felt strongly about the subject was Lee Peterson, president/CEO of Sun Health. In 1994, he announced that Sun Health’s 89-acre campus surrounding the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital would include senior residential living that provided “graduated services according to needs.” These graduated services would include independent living, assisted living and long-term care. He was not prepared to announce a firm timeline or final details, but indicated that discussions were under way to build a senior residential living center in Sun City West similar to the Freedom Plaza Life Care Community in Peoria, east of Sun City.

Assisted Living

The Madison, at 18626 Spanish Garden Drive, opened in 1984 and was the first to offer assisted living. This option was offered to its residents through an arrangement with Olsten/Kimberly Quality Care. According to Lee Beaty, then co-manager of the facility, 31 of its units were contracting for assisted care in 1994. The availability of this care meant that residents did not have to move from The Madison if they needed some assistance in their daily lives. Beaty pointed out, however, that “The Madison did not plan to provide care equivalent to that of a nursing home.” Today, residents are still able to contract for needed assistance from local home healthcare agencies, and to remain in the apartment that has become “home.”

The first full-fledged assisted living facility came in May 1998 when Sun Healthcare Group of Albuquerque (no relation to the local Sun Health) opened the 97-unit Sun Bridge on Sandridge Drive. In De-



The Sunshine Serenaders have performed more than 400 concerts since starting as an offshoot of the Westernaires Chorus in November 1981. The great majority of these concerts have been performed in nursing homes in the Sun Cities and other West Valley suburbs. Frances Decker, the founder and director (seated at piano) says, “We like to spread cheer and sunshine, and that’s why we’re called the ‘Sunshine Serenaders.’” The group is shown here in an “April Showers” program at the Plaza Del Rio Nursing Home in April 1991. *Photo courtesy of Frances Decker*

cember 1999, the facility was sold to Epoch Senior Living, Inc. and the name was changed to Epoch Assisted Living. Units range from studio to two-bedroom apartments. Monthly rates include a basic apartment services fee and a wellness care level fee. The appropriate wellness care level is determined for each resident following a care management assessment completed by the Wellness Director. Respite (short-term) care is also available for up to three months. Among the amenities at Epoch are recreational programs and transportation available seven days a week, a nurse on duty 24 hours a day, personal pendants to summon emergency assistance, fresh flowers throughout the dining room and entry, and weekly housekeeping.

First Nursing Homes

Sunwest Nursing and Rehabilitation Center at Meeker Boulevard and Camino del Sol opened in June 1985. With 132 beds, it offers skilled and intermediate care in semi-private and private rooms. The facility is Medicare-certified and provides round-the-clock nursing care. Rehabilitation services are offered six days a week and include speech therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy to restore the greatest possible degree of functional independence. Religious services, beauty and barber services and scheduled transportation also are available.

The opening of Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in 1988 brought a second nursing care center to Sun City West. Located on the fifth floor of the hospital was the Del E. Webb Extended Care Center with 55 beds. This facility serves the transitional needs of people who have been released from the hospital but who require more care than can be provided at home. The center was not intended as a permanent home and the average stay is about eight or nine days.

In 1997, the 98-bed, Sun Health Grandview Care Center opened adjacent to Grandview Terrace. It provided around-the-clock care and offered a natural transition to assisted living and skilled nursing care for residents of Grandview Terrace as well as others in the community. It was expanded in 2002 with the addition of 81 units to meet the growing needs of the community. A social services director and an activity director are on staff, adding to the dimension of care provided. Residents' needs are met through a flexible range of options including residential assisted living (providing studio and one-bedroom suites complete with kitchenettes and balconies), medical assisted living (offering a higher degree of assistance) and skilled

nursing services (providing extensive nursing intervention in everyday living). Alzheimer's care is also part of the services offered. The Open Arms Program provides a secure unit for individuals with dementia and related care needs.

In October 2001, Gail Chase, chief operating officer, Roskamp/Sun Health Management Services, announced that the Sun Health Grandview Care Center was the first skilled-nursing facility in the State of Arizona to become a registered Eden Alternative facility. "The Eden Alternative philosophy seeks to eliminate the three plagues of loneliness, helplessness and boredom that affect our elders in nursing homes. We are combating these plagues by providing increased opportunities for companionship and growth. We do this by incorporating plants, animals and children into the daily lives of our residents," said Chase.

Care for the Memory-Impaired

The Alterra Healthcare Corporation manages two facilities in Sun City West. The Clare Bridge residence at Camino del Sol and Meeker Boulevard opened in July 1999. Its 42 rooms provide a secure setting for up to 52 residents. A second, 56-bed Clare Bridge facility is located on 151st Avenue, south of Deer Valley Drive. This originally opened in 1998 as Arden Courts, belonging to Manor Care. In July 1999, it became a part of the Alterra network.

Each facility is divided into smaller, self-contained "houses" surrounding a central common area. Each house has 13-14 bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen, baths and laundry. Common areas include activity and craft rooms, hair salon, enclosed yard with a walking path and a wellness center. A simple architectural layout and visual cues help residents stay oriented and as independent as possible. Special activities include exercise, music, van trips, entertainment, memory enhancement and more. Emphasis is on fostering as much independence as residents are capable of and making them feel good about themselves. Respite care is also available by the hour or for extended periods up to one month giving caregivers relief when needed.

The Bridges Residence located on the first floor of the Epoch Assisted Living facility opened in July 1998. It features accommodations for 14 memory-impaired residents. Both shared apartments and private studio apartments are available. Residents and staff work together (as residents are able) to do such everyday tasks as making

beds, tidying apartments, folding laundry, etc. Special programs help stimulate the mind, body and spirit of residents in a comfortable, secure environment.

As previously mentioned, Alzheimer's care is also available as part of the services offered by the Sun Health Grandview Care Center.

In 2002, two support groups were available in Sun City West. One was sponsored by Interfaith Services and meets monthly in the Adult Day Health Center in the Sun City West Foundation Building. A support group for male caregivers meets monthly at Desert Garden United Church on 128th Avenue.

Hospice Care

Sun Health Hospice at Sun City West opened in early 2001 to offer comfort, care and support within a home-like setting for up to 10 patients and families coping with a terminal illness. Services are being provided within the Alterra Clare Bridge facility on 151st Avenue until Sun Health opens its own freestanding hospice in 2004.

The Sunwest Nursing and Rehabilitation Center at 14002 Meeker Boulevard also provides hospice services.

In-home hospice services are available to Sun City West residents through Sun Health and several other organizations.



Social interaction and physical fitness are combined in this fun activity at Alterra Clare Bridge on 151st Avenue. Pictured from left to right are: Frank Horrocks, Marion Rocker, Jean Grzelakowski, Margaret Phillippe, Winnifred Bemis and Josephine Conant. *Photo courtesy of Alterra Clare Bridge*

MANAGING THE COMMUNITY'S AFFAIRS

Sun City West is a “city” in name only as it is an unincorporated community. As such, it does not have the usual city government structure. It depends on the County Board of Supervisors for public health services, street maintenance, building and zoning codes, and law enforcement.

Two organizations are actively involved in managing community affairs: The Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc. and the Property Owners and Residents Association. This section examines how they are structured, how they operate and the challenges they face.

Chapter 22

The Recreation Centers

The key to Del Webb's success in selling his retirement communities was – and still is – the amenities offered to residents. Deciding how to provide and manage those recreational facilities was crucial to the on-going success of those communities.

Today, Sun City West's recreational amenities have a replacement value of more than \$150 million. They involve 280,000-sq. ft. under roof, 105 acres of grounds plus seven golf courses, 426 employees and an annual operating budget of \$14 million. It is truly a big business!

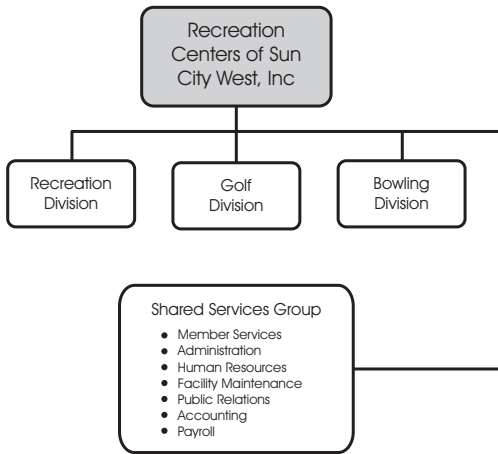
Ownership of the Recreational Facilities

DEVCO (Del E. Webb Development Company) established a non-profit corporation, the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc., to own and manage the recreational amenities of the community. This organization, commonly referred to as the "Association," consists of the Recreation, Golf and Bowling Divisions, plus a Shared Services Group. This latter group provides accounting, human resource and payroll services to the three divisions, as well as general services to members, public relations and overall administration.

A common misconception is that residents "own" the golf courses and rec centers. It is more correct to say that residents are "members," as the Association owns all the facilities.

Role of the Governing Board

Overseeing the Association is an elected, nine-member Governing Board of Directors. These directors are all unpaid volunteers and serve three-year overlapping terms, with three elected each year. After serving his or her term, a director must step down and may not serve again for at least one year.



Organization table showing the basic elements of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc.

The Governing Board sets overall policy for the Association, hires the general manager, and approves his compensation. The directors elect officers from among their membership: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. It is important to note, however, that directors are not involved with the day-to-day operation of the facilities.

The board's actions are governed by the Articles of Incorporation, the Association's Bylaws, and by the policies established by previous boards. Changes to bylaws require a unanimous

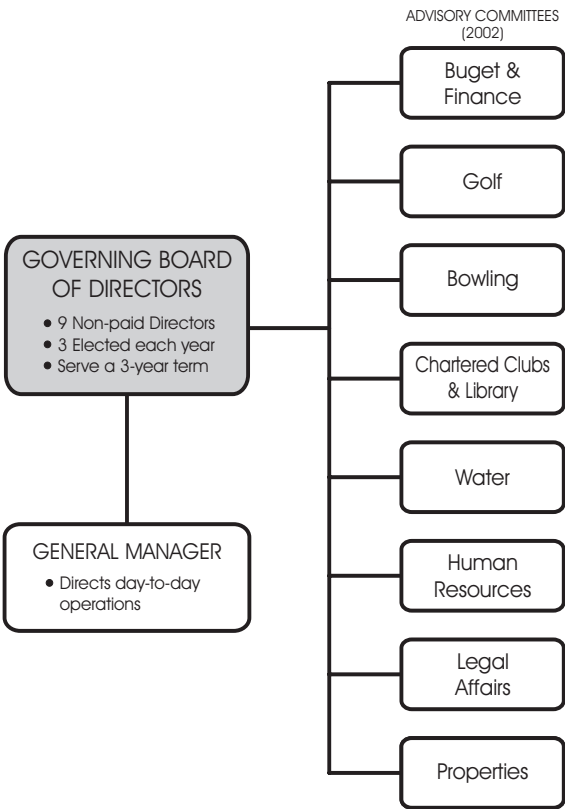
vote of the directors, whereas policies may be established or modified by a majority vote.

Governing Board committees help in recommending policy changes, analyzing problems and reviewing operations as required to support the board's oversight responsibilities. The Board President appoints directors to head the various committees. They then search for five to ten residents with necessary expertise to serve on their committee. Terms are for one year, although they may be re-appointed. It should be emphasized that these committees are advisory in nature and have no decision-making authority.

The board holds public meetings monthly, except for July and August. The membership is invited to comment on the issues brought before the board for its action.

Role of the General Manager

The General Manager is the Association's chief operating officer, responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and operation of all facilities and amenities. All employees, except for the Board's office manager, are under the direction and control of the general manager, who sets their duties, responsibilities and salaries within an established schedule.



The Governing Board sets overall policy for the Association, hires the General Manager and oversees operations. Advisory committees are each headed by a Board Director with members selected from the community. The knowledge of committee members is also available to the General Manager at his request.

Division and are used to operate and maintain the recreational centers. According to the bylaws, the Golf and Bowling Divisions are expected to pay their own way. Thus, golfers and bowlers pay their annual rec fee, plus additional user-based fees. The latter cover the cost of operating and maintaining their facilities and equipment, plus a portion of the expenses of the Shared Services Group. Golf club houses are the responsibility of the Golf Division while the Sports

Reporting directly to the general manager are senior managers of recreation, golf and business. They, in turn, oversee the daily work and direct the efforts of more than 400 employees, many of them residents.

Funding of the Association's Expenses

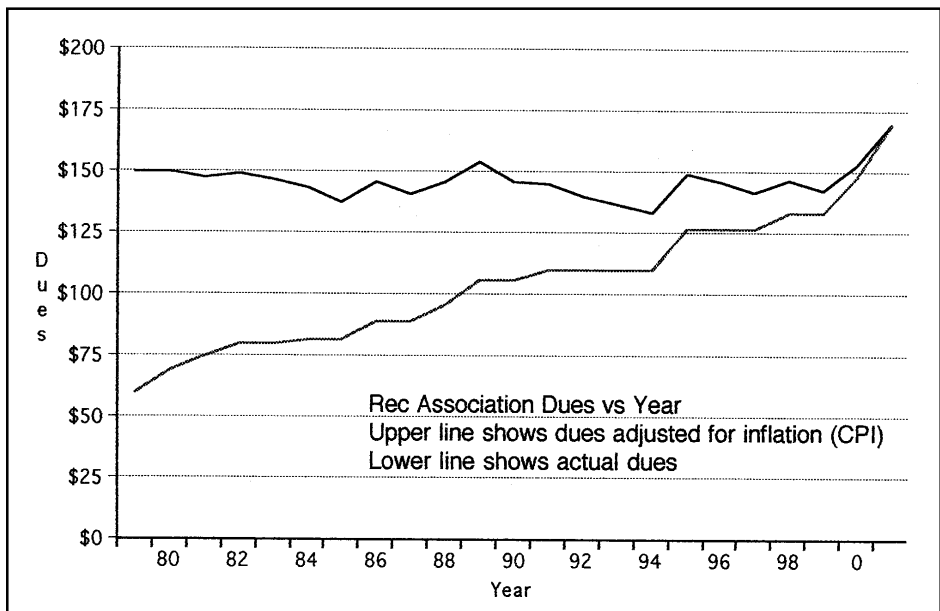
With property ownership comes the obligation for each property owner to pay annual dues to the Association. Renters who wish to use the recreational facilities must also pay an annual fee regardless of the length of time they rent. Owners of properties such as Heritage Traditions or The Madison pay an additional annual fee per occupant.

These annual dues accrue to the Association's Recreation

Pavilion housing bowling is the responsibility of the Recreation Division, along with the library and other recreational center facilities.

The Association is not expected to operate at a deficit. In order to make sure that dues and fees will cover expected expenses, the Governing Board conducts an annual budgeting process. With the help of its Budget and Finance Committee, the board receives a proposed financial plan from the general manager by April, itemizing what he believes will be needed to properly maintain Association facilities and to provide the services members want. The budget must be publicly presented to the membership early in May, and subsequently approved by the Governing Board. Any changes in dues or fees generally take effect July 1, which is the start of the Association's fiscal year. Under the bylaws, annual dues may not be increased by more than 15% in any single year.

Major repairs, renovations and enhancements costing more than a specified sum (for example, \$75,000 in the case of the Recreation Di-



While Association dues have increased over the years, they actually have remained relatively stable over a 23-year period when inflation is taken into account. The lower line shows the actual dues, whereas the upper line shows dues adjusted for inflation. *Sources: Rec Centers for the yearly dues; Bureau of Labor Statistics for Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers, Years 1979 - 2001.*

vision) are made from reserve funds established in each of the Association's three operating divisions. The board determines the size of these funds and creates a mechanism to keep them within pre-set limits. DEVCO was the original source for these funds, paying into them as homes were completed. Since then, a portion of each member's annual dues is allocated to the Recreation Division's Facility Reserve, and the board determines what portion, if any, of the golf and/or bowling fees will be allocated to their respective reserves.

Another source of funding for improvements comes from Asset Preservation Fees paid by new residents when purchasing a home in Sun City West. This fee (\$845 in 2002) was established by the board in 2001, and is collected through escrow. The board may allocate these asset preservation funds to any project or equipment need of the Association. They are most often used to complement the various Reserve Funds or to fund expenditures that are smaller than the Reserve Fund criteria. The board may annually allocate unused Asset Preservation Fees to the various Reserve Funds.

Chartering of Clubs

One of the persons reporting to the Association's general manager oversees club activity and helps establish Rules, Regulations and Policies (RR&Ps) for these clubs. Chartered clubs are related entities of the Association and benefit from the use of Rec Center facilities. The Association also provides these clubs with administrative assistance, accounting services and insurance coverage.

To become chartered, a club must be open to any Rec Center member, have a minimum of 75 dues-paying members and agree to abide by all the other RR&Ps. A gender exception indicative of an earlier era permits the Men's and Women's Clubs to be chartered even though each is only open to a certain segment of the population.

There are about 100 chartered clubs at present; their names may be found in the Appendix. There are approximately another 100 un-chartered clubs active in the community, some of which rent meeting space from the Rec Centers. Among the most active are the state clubs.

A Private Water Utility

Few residents know that the Association has seven wells that it operates, along with the necessary pumps, storage and piping to pro-

vide water to its golf courses. Hillcrest and Briarwood golf courses have their own wells, and are a part of the pipe network. This protects all the courses in the event of having to shut down one of the wells. It should be noted that the water in this system is not for drinking and is intended solely for watering the grass.

In 1978, a 20-inch diameter pipe was laid from the wastewater treatment plant near 111th Avenue and Beardsley Road to Sun City West and connected to the existing golf course water network. The idea was to conserve groundwater by using treated wastewater to irrigate the courses. Unfortunately, the discharge water carried too many nutrients, and algae soon clogged the sprinkler heads and piping. The experiment failed, and the Association returned to pumping groundwater.

In the near future, it is expected that Central Arizona Project (CAP) water will be used to water the golf courses. In 2002, the local utility, Arizona-American Water Company (formerly Citizens Water) awaited state approval of plans for a major pipeline to bring CAP water to the Sun Cities. It will use the original 20-inch pipeline for the last part of the CAP water's journey to the Association's golf courses.

A Year of Controversy

The Year 2002 was marked by a series of actions that caused concern among some residents.

First was the use of a closed executive session by the Rec Centers Governing Board to determine a severance package for General Manager R. G. Andersen-Wyckoff, who had announced his early retirement, and then the board proceeded to keep the details confidential. Rumors, however, quickly spread and the agreement was released to the public. Many residents were upset to learn the value of the severance package for a general manager who had worked for the Association for only three years.

Elections for three Governing Board members were held in March but the newly elected members would not begin their term until July 1. Instead of waiting for the new board members to be seated, the existing board moved to fill the general manager vacancy. In an executive session, they appointed Jon Cannon as general manager. Cannon had worked for the Rec Centers for several years and promoting from within was felt to be preferable to the cost of a national search and the time it would take.

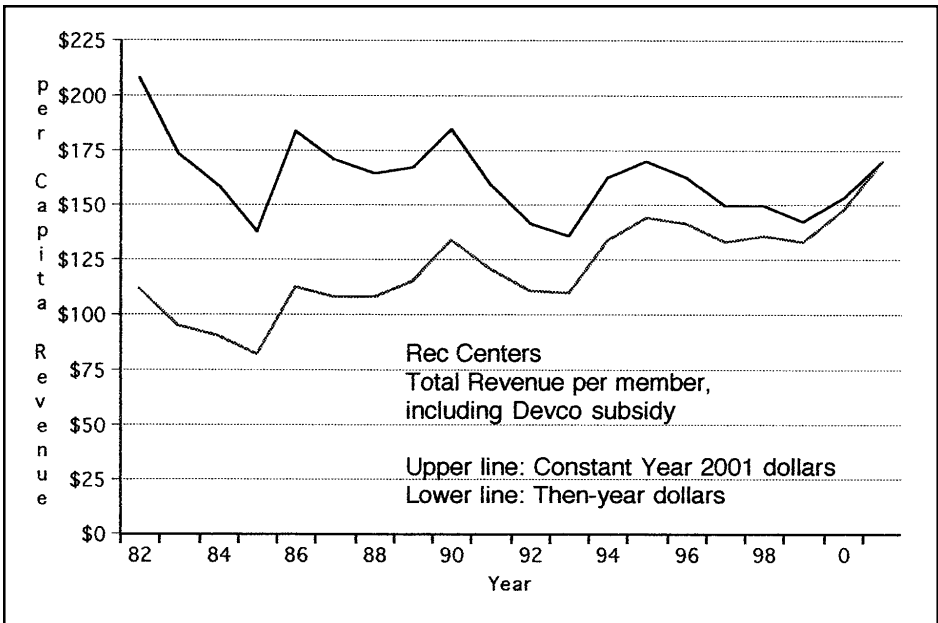
At the same time, however, some former Rec Centers employees made allegations of improper conduct on Cannon's part. Rather than postpone Cannon's appointment until these could be checked out, the Governing Board swung their full support behind Cannon and he stepped into his new position. The allegations made headlines in the local newspaper week after week, adding to the unrest in the community. The board had its legal firm look into the allegations, and it found no basis for them. Some current employees came to Cannon's defense, but their voices apparently went unheard. Instead of abating, the controversy continued and Cannon announced his resignation just two months after assuming his new position. He also announced that he intended to file a constructive discharge lawsuit against the Governing Board.

The end result of all this controversy was not known as this history was being written. Todd Patty, senior manager of golf and environmental services, and Denise Babirak, human resources manager, were named as joint interim general managers. A new grass-roots organization, Sun City West Owners for Open Government (SCWOOG), was being formed to review the bylaws that govern the Rec Centers Association and Governing Board. SWOOG members hoped to better define and reduce the use of closed meetings by the Governing Board, and to provide public access to previously confidential information such as the general manager's salary and severance agreements. Unknown, too, is the final outcome of Cannon's resignation and his possible constructive discharge lawsuit. Arizona state law protects employees who leave as a result of untenable working conditions where supervision does not take corrective action to improve working conditions. The impact on Rec Centers employees is hard to assess as they bear the brunt of daily contact with residents and many employees feel Cannon was treated unfairly. The only thing certain is that it will take a long time for trust to be restored, and for healing to take place.

On Nov. 25, 2002, it was announced that George Grimstad, a Sun City West resident, was selected by the Governing Board to be the next general manager.

Future Challenges

The Governing Board is crucial to a smooth-running organization and one that earnestly seeks to serve the needs of the greater community. Overall, most residents are satisfied with the way the Association is run and as a result, voter turnout is typically less than 10%. This



An analysis of Association revenues per member shows a general downtrend over the formative years of the community when inflation is taken into account. The lower line shows the annual dues plus the DEVCO subsidy per member in actual dollars by year. The upper line adjusts these figures for inflation in terms of constant Year 2001 dollars. Various peaks in the lower line at Years 1986, 1990 and 1994 reflect the opening of Beardsley, Kuentz and the new amenities in the northern expansion area. Subsidies ended in 1999. *Sources: Rec Centers for the yearly dues; Footnotes to audited financial statements for the Webb Corp. subsidies; Bureau of Labor Statistics for Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers, Years 1979 – 2001.*

makes it easy for special interest groups to turn out and elect members who promise to put their priorities ahead of the community's. Fortunately, even if this happens, the staggered terms of office and the three-year term limit gradually bring matters back into perspective as other, less partial individuals come on the board.

Having two organizations, Property Owners & Residents Association (PORA) and the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, Inc., represent residents also poses issues and potential conflict. Over the years, several attempts have been made to study the merger of the two organizations with the most recent taking place in 2002. As will be noted in the section on PORA, in 1992 DEVCO brought together

leaders from various community organizations to look at forms of governance once construction was complete. Based on the information gathered during this study, the Webb Corporation decided to have just one organization representing residents in its future communities.

As the community celebrates 25 years, it also finds many of its residents older and less involved in golf, bowling and tennis. This reduces the revenues needed to support the golf courses and bowling alleys, and poses the challenge of finding the necessary funds to maintain these amenities in top-notch condition. Even those who do not use them benefit from the favorable impression they make on prospective home purchasers.

The success of the Association depends on many people: conscientious employees, dedicated and impartial board members, and hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers to staff committees and provide club leadership. Fortunately, Sun City West is not lacking in good people. Its major challenge is to motivate them to serve – and then to treat them with respect and appreciation.

Chapter 23

Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA)

Sun City West does not have its own government. Like the other 31 unincorporated communities in Arizona, it relies on its County Board of Supervisors for public health services, street maintenance, building and zoning codes, and law enforcement. Because Sun City West is not an incorporated municipality like nearby Surprise and Peoria, it has no public officials and can take no official political action.

To partially fill that gap of political inaction, residents in 1979 formed the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA), a non-profit organization. (Beginnings are described in Chapter 17.) Since that



Members of the Executive Committee of the new Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association met in 1979 to sign applications for non-profit status. Present were President Gene Wilson, seated; and from left, Loise Copes, secretary; Joseph Kelso, liaison director-membership; William Stewart, first vice president; Lawrence Cross, treasurer; and Arthur Knapp, liaison director-voter registration. *August 1979 SCW Activities Calendar*

time, that volunteer body has communicated the interests of the community to the Maricopa County Board, cooperated with the county to address them and established liaison with neighboring communities and state legislators.

Organization of PORA

The 15 members of PORA's board of directors are elected to three-year terms, which are staggered to maintain board continuity. Board members serve as heads of its various committees. These include: traffic, safety and transportation; utilities and deregulation; planning and zoning; environment and water; legislative liaison; and investigation of violations of the community's CC&R's (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions), a function PORA has traditionally performed for the Recreation Centers of Sun City West. Directors also oversee the Visitors Center, Bingo games and Consumer Services, which helps residents locate qualified sources for repairs, maintenance, landscaping and other work.

The 15 directors and more than 250 volunteers donate their time to the residents of Sun City West. As a result, PORA has only two full-time and four part-time employees. The two full-time employees consist of an Executive Assistant/Office Manager reporting to the president and an assistant reporting to the director responsible for Consumer Services. Two part-time employees assist the office manager, a third provides support for the Visitors Center, and a fourth investigates CC&R complaints.

PORA's Accomplishments On Behalf of the Community

Since its inception in 1979, PORA has helped residents save money on taxes, developed and defended deed restrictions in court, helped protect water rights for every property owner and successfully reduced water and sewer rates.

To assure continuity of lifestyle, PORA led a drive in 1983 to obtain Senior Overlay Zoning for the community, explaining its benefits to the community, circulating petitions and lobbying county officials. This zoning made it easier to enforce deed restrictions that at that time required at least one family member be 50 years old and prohibiting children 18 or younger from living in the community for longer than three months. PORA was successful and the county approved the

zoning in 1984. In 1988, the Federal Fair Housing Act was amended to allow for retirement communities. At least one resident in 80% of the dwellings had to be 55 or over to qualify the community for a senior overlay. The county zoning age qualifications were subsequently changed to comply with Federal law.

“PORA’s goal is to improve the life of all Sun City West residents,” said Randy Fuller, board president (2001-2003).

To achieve that goal, PORA has worked with the County Board of Supervisors to prohibit or modify development of several subdivisions within or near Sun City West that residents did not consider compatible with the retirement community.

It has worked with the county and the state to lower property assessments for Sun City West residents.

On a lighter note, PORA was responsible for seeing that the Arizona Department of Transportation added the Sun City West name to its maps in 1982. Communities with populations of more than 1,500 received representation but Sun City West with nearly 7,000 residents was missing from state maps.

PORA’s Accomplishments Within the Community

PORA has been instrumental in the formation of several organizations that now operate independently: the Sun City West Foundation and its Community Services Center (see chapter 20), Helping Hands and Meals on



PORA was the driving force behind a center for volunteer community services such as a lending organization and a permanent home for the Posse. To raise funds, PORA began sponsoring an annual Monte Carlo Day at the Sundome in 1981. The November 1985 event was one in a long list of successful events with more than 3,000 attending, and more than \$31,000 being raised for the building of the Sun City West Community Services Center. DEVCO President Paul Tatz (right) was on hand to officially transfer the deed for the 3.6-acre community services site to the PORA Foundation (now the Sun City West Foundation). Ted Lira, commander of the Posse looked on as Tatz signed the agreement that enabled the Posse to lease one acre of the site from the PORA Foundation for 99 years. *January 1986 SCW Activities Calendar*

Wheels. PORA also has been active in the drive for additional assisted living facilities.

Early on, PORA took leadership in challenging decisions made by the Webb Corporation that could have had an adverse effect on Sun City West. Before there was a Rec Center Advisory Board, PORA came to the defense of residents, protesting DEVCO's July 1980 increase in rec center fees. This led to several community meetings in which John Meeker, president of DEVCO, outlined plans for operating the rec centers and the formation of a residents' "advisory board."

Maintaining the attractive environment that appeals to visitors and residents has been a long-standing goal of PORA. It was instrumental in keeping the Sundome Plaza Shopping Center from being used for a used car lot when Liberty Buick sought approval to install one similar to the lot (now gone) in the Crossroads Center along Bell Road in Surprise. In the case of the community entrance on R. H. Johnson Boulevard at Grand Avenue, PORA sought an acceptable compromise between the developer of the commercial property (for a gas station/convenience store) and residents. As a result, the developer agreed to build several hundred feet of wall along R. H. Johnson Boulevard, bringing security to the rear yards of homes along Limousine Drive. In addition, a propane tank was moved away from the wall, doors were added to the car wash to reduce noise and extra plantings were provided along the wall. An accord saw the developer agreeing to maintain the Sun City West entrance sign even though it was on its property. PORA reviewed the suggested compromise with local residents and received approval from the majority.

In 1998, PORA learned that the Webb Corporation planned to sell land in Surprise near Bell Road and Grand Avenue for a chemical manufacturing plant that would periodically discharge a 150-ft. plume of steam into the air. PORA felt the visible plume and the fact that it came from a chemical factory would have a negative impact on housing sales in Sun City West as well as in the new Sun City Grand and the surrounding area of Surprise. Webb officials claimed they had studied the matter thoroughly and were convinced the plant would not cause any environmental or toxic problems. Unconvinced, PORA launched a petition drive, set up a technology committee to study the chemistry involved, and enlisted the support of Surprise officials. The strong reaction of the community convinced the chemical company to cancel its proposed purchase of land.

PORA's Limitations

But PORA and Sun City West's influence beyond community walls is limited by the community's unincorporated status, and by the fact that PORA does not officially represent all the residents. In 1999, PORA representatives were elected to the Executive Board of WESTMARC (Western Maricopa Coalition), a group of business, municipal and legislative leaders that works for regional welfare in the areas of health, transportation, economic development, education, water rights and protecting Luke Air Force Base.

PORA's request to be included in the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), however, has been denied. MAG, the federally recognized local authority for regional transportation planning, air and water quality control and numerous other matters that involve federal oversight, is composed of local mayors and city/town managers. Since Sun City West has no government officials, it does not fulfill the requirements for membership. It is represented by Maricopa County.



Shovels dug into Sun City West soil during groundbreaking ceremonies for the new PORA building at 13815 Camino del Sol in June 1980. Doing the spadework were (from left): Jack Gierman, chairman of the building committee; Pete Strupp; John Meeker, DEVCO president; Al Graff, Valley National Bank branch manager; and Joe Kelso, PORA president. *June 30, 1980 Daily News-Sun*

Funding of PORA

Membership in PORA is voluntary; annual dues are currently \$8 per person. Over the years, about half of Sun City West's residents have joined each year but PORA provides its services to all residents.

Friday Night Bingo

Sun City West residents have been able to play Bingo in their own community since June 1980. By state law, the sponsoring organization had to be two years old, and PORA was organized May 20, 1978.

"There wasn't any Bingo, and people wanted to play, so PORA started it," said Wes Warren, a PORA director responsible for the Bingo operation. The games go on every Friday night year round at Johnson Social Hall.

But Bingo isn't just for fun. It's also for fund raising. The Bingo operation grosses about \$250,000 a year. Proceeds have been used to pay off the \$150,000 mortgage on the PORA building, as well as to help support several area organizations, including the Sun City West Foundation, PRIDES, Westside Food Bank, the Salvation Army, Interfaith Services and Habitat for Humanity. When the Visitors Center was getting started, proceeds from Bingo games paid off the center's \$80,000 mortgage.

"Bingo not only enables residents to play without going outside their local community, but also supports many worthy causes," said Warren.



Friday night Bingo games were an instant hit! This scene from June 1981 shows a small portion of the more than 300 regulars who came every week from Sun City and Sun City West. The games were popular, too, with those visiting in the Vacation Apartments. *June 1981 SCW Activities Calendar*

Sponsorship of a telephone directory and a large foldout map also provide income as PORA updates the information in each annually. The directory contains some 60 pages of local information for the benefit of residents, along with a listing of residents by their prior home city and state. Extra copies of the directory are available from PORA for newcomers to the community. The map covers the three local Sun Cities as well as other surrounding communities. PORA receives 6,000 copies of the map for use in the Visitors Center.

Bingo proceeds are used in support of other local organizations. The Rec Centers benefit as PORA rents the Johnson Social Hall for the weekly Bingo games.

The Visitors Center receives no funds from PORA and depends on donations from residents, businesses and organizations for its support.

The Issue of Incorporation

PORA's position as the quasi-governmental body for Sun City West has been challenged periodically during its existence. In 1989, PORA initiated a vote of the residents on the question of incorporation. Its Bylaws (Article III, subsection 2a) require that it investigate the various forms of government that might be applicable to the community, and the ad hoc committee PORA appointed for that function recommended incorporation. In a Nov. 6, 1989, letter to residents, PORA President Al Spanjer stated: "The board supports the findings of the Governance Committee, and strongly recommends a YES vote in favor of the incorporation of Sun City West." That would give the community a legal local government.

The letter also stated that all the former PORA presidents had agreed that PORA "cannot adequately serve the total governmental needs of all the community or politically represent Sun City West when dealing with local, county or state offices."

But the voters didn't agree. In the Nov. 15, 1989, vote, 5,442 residents voted against incorporation, while only 3,954 voted for it. PORA membership dropped dramatically as a result.

The issue slumbered for about ten years, and was revived in 1999. The Recreation Centers Association and PORA joined in appointing a Long-Range Planning Committee to study ten community issues. PORA President Phil Garner and Recreation Board member Bob Beaupre were the committee's co-chairmen.

Ten subcommittees made up of residents studied multiple issues: community maintenance, community relations and marketing, disaster planning, education, land use, police and fire, senior care, transportation, water and utilities, and forms of government.

The Forms of Government Subcommittee considered several possibilities for the future: stay as we are; ask another city to annex us; combine PORA and the Recreation Centers of Sun City West into a Community Association; become an incorporated city. While the committee's original report, dated Feb. 5, 1999, included no recommendation for the ideal form of government, an "addendum" dated Mar. 5, 1999, stated: "...we submit that the only way in which Sun City West can control its future is to incorporate as a municipality." Eight committee members signed it.

But neither the Recreation Centers Board nor the PORA Board acted on the subcommittee's report when it was presented. "PORA does not endorse the concept of incorporation at this time," said Phil Garner, PORA president. (PORA later dropped the words "at this time.") He pointed out that some members of the committee had also been members of the 1989 committee that investigated the issue, and he called the report "biased."

Greg Seguin, committee chairman, countered that only two subcommittee members were incorporation proponents then, and that when his subcommittee began its work, eight of its ten members were against the concept. At the time of the report, nine had changed their minds, he said.

Frustrated at PORA's lack of action on the subcommittee's recommendation, three of its members formed "Westers for Self-Government," a grassroots group that began to hold public meetings to educate the public on their view of incorporation. Dick Gray and Tom Young joined Seguin on the group's steering committee.

The group held a few meetings and began to organize a campaign, but Seguin's departure from Sun City West in late 1999 put a serious dent in their efforts. The final blow to the fledgling incorporation movement was the Webb Corporation's announcement that it might buy the Bodine property north of Deer Valley Road and east of Sun City West, to build a senior community. Committee members reasoned that it would be better to wait to see if the new development would be part of Sun City West before it geared up further incorporation efforts.

The Webb Corporation began its proposed development, “Pleasant Valley Country Club” (later named “Corte Bella”), in 2002, not as part of Sun City West, but as a separate community. By then, the incorporation issue had once again faded into the background.

Emergence of the SCW Coalition

Another challenge to PORA’s leadership surfaced in 1998. Prior to the Webb Corporation’s purchase of the Bodine property, Continental Homes had proposed building an inter-generational community on the site. The subdivision would have included 2,400 homes on 640 acres, resulting in a density higher than that of Sun City West.

PORA initially urged Sun City West residents “to view this development in a spirit of neighborliness and friendship,” according to a press release from then-PORA President Noel Willis. (*Daily News-Sun*, Oct. 22, 1998) PORA proposed an “interface” group composed of representatives of community organizations to meet with Continental to “address challenges and enhance opportunities” of the proposed development.

PORA’s response, viewed by many residents as too soft, resulted in the formation of the Sun City West Community Coalition “to preserve the community’s lifestyle.” Its initial goal was to “stop the development or minimize its negative impact on Sun City West.” The Coalition cited fire and police protection, increased traffic and possible increased crime as some of its concerns. The group presented a 12,000-signature petition protesting the Continental Homes development to Maricopa County Supervisor Jan Brewer.

While both PORA and the Coalition opposed the high density, they differed on what specific density would be acceptable. They also disagreed on which group should represent the community before the Maricopa County Planning and Development Department which had the responsibility to recommend or deny approval of the subdivision to the County Board of Supervisors.

Each of the groups claimed to represent Sun City West residents, and the County Planning and Development Department invited both groups to attend and participate in the hearings. Supervisor Brewer subsequently informed Continental Homes that the county would not approve density above the limit recommended by PORA, and requested Continental to withdraw its development application if it could not meet that requirement. The developer decided against pursuing the matter further.

In early 2000, the Del Webb Corporation announced plans to acquire the Bodine Orchard and develop it as an adult community separate from Sun City West. A few months later, the Webb organization cancelled their plans citing unsatisfactory financial conditions. PORA met independently with the agent negotiating the sale of the Bodine property and with the Webb Corporation in an effort to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. In the process, PORA learned that the Bodine Orchard had been ordered by the State to change their irrigation to a drip system. This would mean replanting the orchard, and was not financially feasible. Bodine needed to sell. PORA also learned that a developer of multi-generational housing was negotiating with Bodine. PORA's role as a mediator was successful in bringing the Bodine and Webb organizations back into negotiations, and a deal was finally struck. The new community would be for adults, and built by a developer sensitive to Sun City West concerns.

PORA and Coalition Work Together

PORA and the Coalition cooperated on some other issues to benefit the community. PORA surveyed area residents that would be most affected by construction of a proposed Walgreens Drug Store at the intersection of Deer Valley Drive and 151st Avenue. That survey showed significant opposition to the proposed location. PORA advised the developer that based on the survey results, PORA would oppose construction plans. The Coalition supported PORA's position. The developer subsequently withdrew its rezoning request from consideration by the county. A new Walgreens store was built instead at R. H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol.

In 1998, the County Transportation Board recommended moving ahead with design to eventually expand El Mirage Road to a six-lane highway. PORA was made aware that the plan called for adding lanes to the existing roadway and recommended that the County move the new road 600 feet east to minimize noise and pollution for residents living along the eastern border of Sun City West. The Coalition supported this effort. After considerable discussions, the County Department of Transportation agreed with PORA's proposal. The new design was competed and actual construction will be dependent upon receiving funds from land developers to the north of Sun City West.

Connection of Loop 303 and Deer Valley Drive

In 1997, PORA and the Recreation Centers Association established an agreement with the county to connect Deer Valley Drive to the proposed Loop 303 Interim Estrella Freeway. It was proposed that the connection be made but with a barricade in place. It was further proposed that six to twelve months after this section of Loop 303 was completed, a referendum would be held in Sun City West. Residents would then vote on whether or not the barricade should be removed to permit traffic flow to and from Loop 303.

In 1999, Phil Garner, then president of PORA, initiated talks with the County Department of Transportation and Supervisor Brewer to halt any construction plans to connect Deer Valley Drive to Loop 303. PORA conducted a membership survey to solicit opinions regarding PORA's proposal that there be no connection whatsoever between the two roads. The survey resulted in 85-percent approval of PORA's position. A subsequent vote was held in October 1999 by means of a coordinated Recreation Centers and PORA election. The results were 3 to 1 in favor of not making this connection. Based on this vote, the Board of Supervisors agreed to drop plans for the connection. Brewer and her successor, Max Wilson, assured Sun City West residents that Deer Valley Drive would remain closed to through traffic.

When Are Two Organizations Better Than One?

PORA grew out of an interest to influence external issues (e.g. school bond), whereas the Recreation Centers Association was started by DEVCO to prepare the community for eventually taking over responsibility for the recreational facilities. Membership in PORA is voluntary, whereas owners must join the Recreation Centers Association.

In 1991, DEVCO, with the assistance of Arthur Andersen & Co., and the cooperation of the Recreation Centers and PORA, did a Community Review for Sun City West. It defined six alternative community structures for residents to consider when the Webb organization pulled out after completing development of the community. The six alternatives closely paralleled those later considered by the Forms of Government Subcommittee in 1999. They were: maintain the status quo, annexation by an adjacent municipality, incorporation, a master association formed by merging the Recreation Centers with PORA, creation of a special district or reliance on volunteers to run the com-

munity. The report made no specific recommendation, but emphasized the need for action.

The report pointed out that the lifestyle of residents would be negatively impacted unless mechanisms were developed that could supply the level of service currently provided by the Webb organization. It also stated that the most successful community structures should have the authority to represent the community as a whole, and require mandatory participation of all residents.

The Webb Corporation looked at the consultant's report and decided to have a single organization representing residents in communities they built in the future. This body would manage the recreational facilities, police the CC&Rs and represent the community to the surrounding area, whether it involved a city or a county. This is the practice employed in Sun City Grand and other, subsequent Webb developments.

Discussion of combining the two organizations has continued over the years. In 1999, the two boards took a few hesitant steps toward forming a "community association" that would officially represent the community. But the differences between the bylaws, functions and organization of the two bodies proved to be a bottleneck to change.

Welcoming Visitors, Serving Residents

The Sun City West Visitors Center was born from a desire by residents to maintain the community they loved.

"We watched what happened to Sun City when developer Del Webb left: property values declined and home sales were sluggish. We decided we'd make sure that didn't happen here," said Caryl Shafer, the PORA director who most recently has overseen operations of the Visitors Center.

The main thrust of the center, opened in 1997, is to publicize Sun City West to both its own residents and to visitors. The ultimate goal is to maintain property values in the community by getting across the message that Sun City West is a great place to live. It has "everything under the sun," as the logo featuring a bursting sunrise, suggests.

"We're not here to sell houses," said Shafer. "We're here to show people a way of life."

Volunteers at the center, housed in an addition to the PORA

building, greet more than 13,000 people a year, 40% of whom are local residents. Brochures on local businesses and organizations, as well as information on sightseeing in the Phoenix area and other parts of Arizona are available. A videotape on the Sun City West lifestyle is shown to newcomers and tours of the community are offered.

In order to bring Sun City West to the attention of potential retirees, the Visitors Center is the only organization placing advertising on behalf of the community in national magazines. The budget is small but the ads draw hundreds of inquires. Information packets are mailed to nearly 2,000 people in the U.S. and Canada each year.

A "Discover Sun City West" brochure was prepared in 2001, and copies were distributed to other visitor centers throughout the state. The Sun City West Visitors Center is part of the state network of 64 official visitor centers.

The center, a subsidiary of PORA, secures its own funding, about 60% of which comes from residents, and 40% from businesses and community organizations. PORA helped with the original building expense, and proceeds from PORA's Bingo operation helped pay off the center's mortgage. There is only one paid part-time staff member. The work is mostly done by nearly 200 enthusiastic volunteers who staff the Visitors Center seven days a week, and who are eager to share their experience with newcomers.



The Sun City West Visitors Center has proved popular with those passing through, as well as with those living here. Volunteers answer questions, explain the many advantages of the community, provide tours and supply information on sights to see throughout Arizona. In October 2002, the Center welcomed its 75,000th visitor. Photo courtesy of Ed Stroming

By 2002, the two bodies were cooperating more closely to represent the interests of residents to the county board. In February 2002, PORA and the Recreation Association formed a joint committee to further examine the benefits and challenges of a combined organization.

Future Governance

As Sun City West matures, important decisions must be made about how it is governed and how it communicates with the county, the state and adjacent municipalities. The city is no longer an oasis in the desert, but rather is surrounded by new, multi-generational subdivisions. The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors must look after an immense geographical area that is one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the nation. As a result, supervisors may not have the time or the interest to deal with Sun City West's concerns as they had in the past.

Those who study the question of future governance probably will consider the relative merits of the same alternatives studied by DEVCO and the community in 1991, and again by the Forms of Government Subcommittee in 1999. The information in these reports is basic to future studies.

The 1999 subcommittee dismissed almost immediately the first two alternatives: "stay as we are," and "move to a combined community association." It pointed out that we can not really stay as we are, because change and aging are inevitable. With the increasing growth of the entire West Valley, Sun City West will gradually lose what political clout it has as it becomes a smaller portion of a rapidly growing county. The escalating growth of adjacent cities represents a much larger tax base to the county, and could demand more attention from it.

The subcommittee found that combining PORA and the Recreation Board into a community association would be "time consuming, divisive and burdensome on the workers." It dismissed this alternative as impractical, stating that Sun City West would still be an unincorporated county island and would have no legal standing with other communities or the county.

Annexation by another entity was also dismissed by the subcommittee as a viable solution. It appeared at the time that no city had any such interest. The subcommittee discovered, however, that a city could annex our community by sections with permission from those to

be annexed, and would not be required to take the entire area, a possibility that could fracture the community.

The subcommittee strongly recommended incorporation as a city as the best solution for Sun City West. When the issue is examined in the future, as it is sure to be, some of the facts and many of the figures may have changed. But the subcommittee's original report should be worthy of consideration by future committees investigating the issue.

Proponents of incorporation cited two main advantages: Sun City West's control over its own destiny (traffic, roads and planning) instead of reliance on the county; and an incorporated city's participation in state revenue-sharing, which would allow it to receive funds that are now divided among existing municipalities.

Opponents of incorporation said they didn't believe the projected budgets were realistic. They felt that revenue-sharing funds from the state alone would not cover city expenses, and that these funds could decrease in lean times. Sun City West also lacks a sufficient commercial base to generate the additional tax revenues that a city government would need. They feared sales and property taxes would increase, questioned whether a community of over-55 people could produce continuity of leadership, and cited the experience of other Arizona communities that have regretted their decision to incorporate.

Opponents also said they feared another layer of government, and said they didn't think the present system of governance was broken. "Since we don't think it [the present system] is broken, we don't want to have it fixed," wrote John A. Orr in a letter to the editor at the height of the 1999 incorporation controversy.

As Sun City West looks to the future, it must also look to its political configuration. For only if that is assured will Sun City West continue to be a place that can offer its 30,000 residents "everything under the sun."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What's past is prologue...

— Shakespeare

Chapter 24

The Impact of the Past Lies Ahead

While the task of compiling the history of Sun City West has been completed, the impact of the past still lies ahead of us. Those of us who live in Sun City West, and who have helped compile this history of the first 25 years, believe there are three significant issues that need to be addressed if Sun City West is to remain an attractive destination for potential retirees. It is not our intent to provide solutions, but only to raise consciousness of the critical nature of these issues. Avoiding them won't make them go away – they will only become increasingly serious.

First is the need to assure an adequate supply of water.

For 25 years, we have depended on wells for our water. The Sun Cities pump more groundwater than the cities of Phoenix, Glendale and Peoria combined. Studies have shown that the water level is dropping, and as more communities are built around Sun City West, the demand on the underlying aquifer will only increase. The drop in the water table is perhaps most notable at Luke Air Force Base, where the ground has subsided 17 feet in certain areas.

Two major initiatives are under way. One is to get Sun City West's allocation of Central Arizona Project (CAP) water approved. This had been held up by a lawsuit brought by the Sun City Taxpayers Association, and that has been resolved in favor of the cities. This will bring CAP water to the golf courses, reducing the amount of groundwater being pumped.

A second initiative seeks to increase the allocation of treated effluent from the sewage treatment plant, and to use this on Sun City West golf courses to get them entirely off groundwater. This was tried

years ago and failed. As a result of that failure, tertiary treatment was added removing nitrates and today's product is similar to CAP water in quality.

Even with these new sources of water, Sun City and Sun City West remain the only Valley communities so dependent on groundwater. The state has mandated that Valley municipalities take steps to replenish their underground water supplies, and most have made the necessary investments to do so. They are incensed that the Sun Cities aren't taking similar action simply because they are unincorporated. As they bring pressure on the State Legislature for equal treatment, Sun Citians could find themselves facing a significant water replenishment tax.

The Environmental & Water Committee of PORA provides the lead role for the community in regard to water issues. It needs the support of residents, along with their active involvement in separating fact from hyperbole, as they examine the choices that must be made in the years ahead.

Second are the changing demographics of Sun City West.

Twenty-five years ago, most of the first residents were newly retired. Today, four out of ten residents are more than 75 years old, according to a study conducted by the Rec Centers in late 2001. As a result, interest in active sports has declined with a corresponding reduction in the income needed to support golf and bowling in particular. While less than a third of the residents play golf regularly, the courses add to the beauty and attractiveness of the community, and thereby benefit everyone.

The aging of the community also has a major impact on volunteerism. Organizations that provide critical services to the community, such as the Posse and the PRIDES, are finding it harder to replace those who leave. If there aren't sufficient volunteers, the community either will have to do without or pay to have these services provided. As Chuck Roach, former DEVCO general manager for Sun City West, pointed out in community forums in the early 1990s, the median strip landscaping along R. H. Johnson Boulevard is an attractive asset to the community, but is far in excess of what Maricopa County would be willing to pay to maintain. That's true, too, of the citrus trees along Stardust Boulevard and the landscaping along other major thoroughfares. Volunteers such as the PRIDES save residents

thousands of dollars a year. The economic importance of their gift needs to be fully understood, appreciated and recognized.

Equally significant to the aging of the population is the aging of the facilities. To attract newcomers, they must be kept in prime condition. Annual recreation center dues paid by residents are the primary source for the funds needed, and as the buildings age, increases in these fees can be expected. Long-time residents remember the first fees of \$60 per year per resident, and lament today's higher cost. Newer residents look at the fees in light of what they paid for memberships in health clubs or local YMCAs in their previous home communities, and find them an incredible bargain.

Third is the future marketing of Sun City West.

Since 1960, the Sun Cities have benefited from the major investments the Webb Corporation has made in advertising and publicizing first, Sun City, then Sun City West, and most recently, Sun City Grand. While the new Corte Bella development will assure a continued Del Webb presence, at some point the last home will be built and the Webb organization will turn its marketing attention to some other area.

The Sun City West Visitors Center was established to welcome visitors and to tell them about the unique advantages of this active adult community. It reaches beyond the local area with advertising in national magazines, and prompt follow-up to inquiries that result. The budget is relatively modest and raised with an annual appeal to residents and local businesses and organizations.

As the Webb Corporation fades from the local scene, the community will need to increase the level of activity in attracting prospects. There are many ways this can be done, but all cost money – whether for advertising in national media, billboards on the outskirts of other Valley retirement communities, or events that result in national publicity. And, Sun City West will be competing for attention with the many other developers of newer retirement communities throughout the Valley of the Sun.

An aging population results in a higher turnover of homes. The key question to be addressed is how can our community obtain the steady stream of prospects needed to assure a strong resale market and maintain highest property values?

A Final Word

There are many other issues that could be listed, and which will need attention in the near future. The important issue of governance, for example, is not mentioned here as it has been touched on in the section on PORA. Whatever the issue, it requires an open mind. Unfortunately, sometimes as individuals grow older, they suffer withdrawal symptoms, not wanting to be bothered with problems and challenges. But at the same time, there is great wisdom among those who have lived long and who have overcome many obstacles. We need to apply this collective wisdom to the challenge of keeping Sun City West as attractive and vibrant in the future as it has been in its past.

Excerpted from a Letter to the Editor that appeared in the Sun Cities Independent, June 21-27, 2000:

"I chose Sun City West because I believe the best is yet to come. I chose Sun City West because I want to live until I die. I chose Sun City West because there is really nothing to complain about and every reason to be as active as health allows. I chose Sun City West because it provides me with the freedom to do all the things I was too preoccupied to do earlier in life. I chose Sun City West because I love people, I love the desert, I love the simpler lifestyle, and I love change and growing. Every day here is a new adventure.

"Living is a privilege. Living is a responsibility. Living is an opportunity. Living is also a choice. And living is a challenge. I chose to live here, and I choose to live while I am here. 'Get a life!' someone says. I have, and I love it!"

— Dr. Emil J. Authelet

APPENDIX

PRESIDENTS OF THE PROPERTY OWNERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (PORA)

1979	Gene Wilson
1980	Joseph Kelso
1981	William Mason
1982	Loise Copes
1983	Robert W. Williams
1984	William H. Thomas
1985	Robert W. Williams
1986	Aubrey Johnson
1987	Dr. Benjamin Davis
1988	Dr. Sanford G. Goldstein
1989	Al Spanger
1990	Morey Jensen
1991	Bob Emmons
1992	Dick Egan
1993	William S. Fry
1994	Arve H. Dahl
1995	Edward J. Cirillo
1996	Hal V. Lind
1997	Noel Willis
1998	Noel Willis
1999	Phil Garner
2000	Phil Garner
2001	Randy Fuller
2002	Randy Fuller
2003	Randy Fuller

RECREATION CENTERS

Advisory Board Presidents

1981	No officers on record
1982	No officers on record
1983	Bob Williams
1984	John Roberts
1985	Bill Moll
1986	Bill Thomas
1987	Jack O'Connor
1988	Jack O'Connor
1989	Virginia Ritson
1990	Tom Cunningham
1991	Cass Ruhlman
1992	Cass Ruhlman

Governing Board Presidents

1993	Al Spanjer
1994	John McMillen
1995	Joe Schoggen
1996	Dirk Prather
1997	Carole Hubbs
1998	Larry Watts
1999	Carole Hubbs
2000	Dick Catlin
2001	Dee Hjermstad
2002	Allen K. Young

General Managers

1979 to Dec. 1989	Bill Woodyard
Jan. 1990 to Jan. 1994	Steve O'Donnell
May 1994 to Apr. 1996	Les Hicks
June 1996 to Oct. 1998	Vince Merenda
Feb. 1999 to June 2002	R. G. Andersen-Wyckoff
July 2002 to Aug. 2002	Jon Cannon
Dec. 2002 to present	George Grimstad

CHARTERED CLUBS OF THE RECREATION CENTERS OF SUN CITY WEST

<u>Club Name</u>	<u>Date Chartered</u>
Agriculture Club	Oct. 2, 1987
Arthritis Club	Aug. 27, 1986
Basketeers Club	April 11, 1986
Bocce Club	April 1987
Bowling Association SCW	July 18, 1984
Bunco	Nov. 11, 1991
Calligraphy West	Nov. 20, 1989
Canasta West	Mar. 30, 1981
Canine Companions	Mar. 10, 1994
Ceramics West.....	Feb. 6, 1980
Clay Club	Oct. 11, 1985
Club Espanol	Dec. 15, 1980
Coin and Stamp Club	Jan. 21, 1983
Computers West	Apr. 13, 1984
Copper Cookers	Mar. 3, 1980
Country Western Dance	Feb. 12, 1993
Creative Silk Flowers	Dec. 15, 1980
Creative Stitchers	Apr. 27, 1994
Crestview Bicycle Riders	Sept. 22, 1981
Cribbage	Jan. 15, 1993
Dancing Arts Club	May 30, 1991
Deer Valley Men's Golf	Jan. 14, 1994
Deer Valley Women's Golf	Jan. 14, 1994
Desert Trails Men's Golf	March, 1995
Desert Trails Women's Golf	Nov. 21, 1994*
Echo Mesa Men's Golf.....	May 18, 1987
Echo Mesa Women's Golf	May 12, 1987
Encore Needle & Craft	Mar. 3, 1980
Encore Round Dance	Dec. 3, 1979
Energetic Exercise	Oct. 1, 1979
Fitness Club	Feb. 1983*
Five-Hundred Cards Club	Mar. 19, 1990
Friends of the Library	Feb. 7, 1980
Garden Club	Dec. 13, 1979
Golf Council	Jan. 27, 1994
Grandview Men's Golf	Jan. 13, 1986

Grandview Women's Golf	Nov. 8, 1985
Handi-Capables.....	Aug. 20, 1984
Hillcrest Ballroom Dance Club	Nov. 5, 1979
Hot Shots	Mar. 21, 1990
International Dance & Social.....	Jan. 8, 1998
Johnson Lapidary	Oct. 18, 1979
Johnson Lawn Bowls	March 1980*
Karaoke Club	May 22, 2000
Kiva West Duplicate Bridge.....	Dec. 15, 1980
Lady Putters.....	Sept. 19, 2002
Latin Ballroom Dance	May 20, 1994
Leather Carvers	Dec. 29, 1982
Line Dancers	Sept. 10, 1993
Mac Cro Knit	Feb. 16, 1982
Mah Jongg	Dec. 9, 1983
Men's Club	May 7, 1980
Metal Club	May 6, 1987
Mini-Golf	Apr. 21, 1987
Mis-Cues	Mar. 31, 1989
Model Railroad	Nov. 2, 1984
Musicians Club	Jan. 12, 1984
One Partner Bridge	Oct. 4, 1979
Organ and Key Board	Nov. 1, 1981
Palo Verde Patchers	June 5, 1981
Pan Club	May 17, 1988
Pebblebrook Men's Golf	May 11, 1989
Pebblebrook Women's 18'ers	Oct. 31, 1979
Pebblebrook Women's Niners	Nov. 3, 1981
Photography West	Jan. 21, 1980
Pinochle	Dec. 11, 1979
Porcelain Painters	Mar. 24, 1986
Racquet Club	Oct. 19, 1979
Racquet/Handball Club	Mar. 9, 1994
RV Club.....	Jan. 27, 1981
Rhythm Tappers	June 16, 1982
Rip & Sew	Feb. 6, 1980
Rockhounds	Nov. 20, 1979
Rosemaling	Nov. 9, 1983
Saturday Ladies Contract Bridge ...	June 25, 1985
Saturday Night Gamesters	Aug. 6, 1997*

Sheepshead	Nov. 3, 1988
Shuffleboard West	Nov. 19, 1979
Singles	Nov. 28, 1980
Softball	Mar. 9, 1987
Sportsman's Club	Feb. 25, 1980
Stained Glass Club	Aug. 27, 1985
Stardust Ladies 18'ers Golf	Nov. 23, 1982
Stardust Ladies Niners	Sept. 16, 1998
Stardust Men's Golf	Feb. 28, 1983
Stardust Theater Council	Dec. 29, 1988
Sun West Art Club	Sept. 27, 1979
Theatre West	Sept. 23, 1980
Tole Artists	Dec. 4, 1987
Toy-Ki Silvercraft West	Sept. 26, 1979
Trail Ridge Men's Golf	Oct. 18, 1989
Trail Ridge Women's Golf	Feb. 5, 1990
Tuesday Contract Bridge	Nov. 8, 1979
Water Fitness Club	Aug. 7, 1980
Weavers West Guild	May 23, 1980
Western Horseshoe	Feb. 8, 1984
Westerners Square Dance	Sept., 1979
Westernaires Chorus	Feb. 2, 1981
Women's Social Club	Dec. 3, 1979
Wood Working	Feb. 22, 1983*
Yoga	Oct. 28, 1994

* Actual date of charter not available. Rec Centers supplied date the club received its Tax ID number which is generally soon after being chartered.

GOLF COURSES *Reserved for Rec Centers Association members and their guests:*

Tee Par Rating Slope Yardage

PEBBLEBROOK 18836 N. 128th Avenue

Blue	72	70.1	119	6410
White	72	68.6	115	6116
Gold	72	66.9	109	5883
Red	72	71.2	118	5803

GRANDVIEW 14260 Meeker Boulevard

Blue	72	72.0	126	6846
White	72	70.2	121	6350
Gold	72	67.3	112	5805
Red	72	70.0	117	5653

TRAIL RIDGE 21021 N. 151st Avenue

Blue	72	71.5	125	6566
White	72	69.2	121	6200
Gold	72	65.9	114	5526
Red	72	71.2	117	5490

DEER VALLEY 13975 Deer Valley Drive

Blue	72	69.8	120	6547
White	72	67.7	113	6080
Gold	72	65.7	106	5667
Red	72	69.9	113	5317

<u>Tee</u>	<u>Par</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Slope</u>	<u>Yardage</u>
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STARDUST 12702 Stardust Boulevard

Blue	60	59.7	89	4236
White	60	58.2	85	3984
Red	60	58.7	87	3577

ECHO MESA 20349 Echo Mesa Drive

Blue	60	63.2	91	4181
White	60	59.3	88	3551
Red	60	55.8	86	3033

DESERT TRAILS 22525 N. Executive Way

Blue	61	61.6	91	4059
White	61	59.8	88	3765
Red	61	55.9	80	3157

Source: Golf course description sheet issued by the Rec Centers,
dated 12/00

“SUN CITY WEST”

Words and Music By Bob Callaghan, 1985

Under a brilliant sky of blue,
I have found my rendezvous,
In the desert in Sun City West,
Neath the Arizona moon,
And the giant saguaro bloom,
in the desert in Sun City West.

Chorus:

I never thought I'd live in Arizona
Where the jackrabbit and roadrunner play,
But I think I've found
A little piece of heaven here on earth,
Near the dry bed Agua Fria.
Hear me say,
It's the place I like the best
Sun City West, Sun City West.

As a town, we are still small,
But as people we stand tall,
And we're growing,
Yes, we're growing every day.
And I never more will roam,
From my Arizona home,
And the place I like the best,
Sun City West, Sun City West.

Chorus Repeat:

I never thought I'd live in Arizona
Where the jackrabbit and roadrunner play,
But I think I've found
A little piece of heaven here on earth,
Near the dry bed Agua Fria.
Hear me say,
It's the place I like the best
Sun City West, Sun City West.

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