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'Do-tank' targets future of Arizona
As Arizona's leaders grapple
with our current fiscal crisis, they
are urging us not to lose sight of the
future of our State. The newly cre-
ated Center for the Future of
ArizonaTnTends to respond to that
challenge by creating an action
agenda strategically targeted to
strengthen key elements of the
Arizona we desire in the years
ahead.
A privately funded "do tank,"
the Center will take on no more
than three major projects at a
time, staying with each chosen
project three to five years to
ensure that clear, bold and mea-
surable goals are accomplished
over the life of each project. With
a Board of well-known civic lead-
ers, I am joined on the Center's
professional staff by Dr. Sybil
Francis, a public policy expert
with more than 20 years experi-
ence in academics, in Congress
and at the White House working
on significant national policy
issues, and who arrived in
Phoenix this past summer with
her husband, ASU President
Michael Crow.
As a very small, lean organiza-
tion, the Center will work in active
collaboration with interested indi-

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LATTIE F.
COOR

Chairman
and CEO

Center for the
Future of
Arizona

third of our young

— viduals and
1 organizations
in pursuing
its goal-ori-
ented agen-
da.
The first
issue the
Center will
address is
1 Arizona's
alarmingly
high dropout
rate among
high school
students. A
recent report
by the
Arizona
Commission
for Post-sec-
ondary
Education
states that
almost one-
people drop out
of school before high school gradu-
ation. Various other reports place
our high school completion rate at
the very bottom of the 50 states.
The consequenceos fsuch a high
dropout rate are a threat to the kind
of Arizona we aspire to in the years
ab ead. Educational levels are

directly related to personal financial
success and to a healthy economy
for the State. We simply must do
better, much better.
Working with the State's leader-
ship, and a number of organizations
and individuals already engaged in
tackling this important issue, the
Center will strive for consensus on
the desired goals for improvement
in our high school completion rate.
We will announce these goals pub-
licly, with widely publicized annual
reports on our collective progress
toward reaching those goals over
each of the next five years.
Two additional projects we will
actively explore over the next sev-
eral months include identifying
opportunities to strengthen the posi-
tion of Arizona's working poor, and
the development of a contemporary
leadership model that will better
meet the needs of the State.
In order to ensure that our work
is part of a coherent vision for
Arizona, over the next four months
the Center will endeavor to create a
consensus vision for the future of
the State drawn from reports and

recommendations from all sources
in Arizona over the past 10 years.
In addition to combing all relevant
documents, we will meet with a
variety of civic and governmental
leaders for advice and, comment as
we seek to develop this working
model. Our preliminary work on a
vision statement has identified the
following elements for inclusion:
• A competitive, knowledge-
based economy
• A State that develops and
retains its most creative and talent-
ed people
• An educational and social
infrastructure that provides full
opportunities for all
• A State that manages its growth
in a way that enhances rather than
degrades its quality of life
• An investment philosophy that
generates adequate resources, pub-
lic and private, to accomplish our
collective goals
• A leadership model appropriate
for a modern, complex society
For more information about the
Center, please visit our Web site at
http: //www. ArizonaFuture .org