



NEWS RELEASE

33 ARIZONA COMMUNITY PROJECTS AMONG SEMIFINALISTS IN "FIVE COMMUNITIES" COMPETITION

Center for the Future of Arizona Seeks to Increase Civic Involvement, Strengthen Communities

PHOENIX (July 18, 2011) - Thirty-three proposals from seven Arizona counties have been selected as semi-finalists in the Five Communities Project sponsored by the Center for the Future of Arizona. The statewide competition seeks to elicit the best ideas for strengthening Arizona at the local level, and help communities move forward in areas such as job creation, education, civic engagement and the environment.

According to Lattie Coor, former Arizona State University President and CFA chairman and CEO, the 33 semifinalists represent one-third of the proposed community projects submitted from highly diverse groups across the state. A list of all 33 semifinalists and brief proposal descriptions can be found at www.TheArizonaWeWant.org. Those eligible to apply included entities with clear geographic boundaries such as municipalities, school districts, tribal communities, economic development regions, religious communities and large neighborhood organizations.

All proposed projects are required to support one or more of the eight goals that Arizona citizens responding to the Gallup Arizona Poll identified as top priorities.

The Gallup Arizona Poll commissioned by CFA found that Arizonans agree more than they disagree on major issues concerning their future. "The findings also indicated that none of the citizens' goals can be achieved without greater citizen involvement and a much greater sense of connection to one another," Coor said. "Only 12 percent of Arizonans believe people in their community care about each other. Only 10 percent believe their elected officials represent their interests."

"The surprisingly strong response to the Five Communities Project is an encouraging first step in helping us build, community by community, the Arizona we want for the future," he said.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROJECTS

The semifinalists' community projects are geographically diverse, including Coconino County to the north, as well as projects along the Mexican border, plus proposals from Arizona's largest metropolitan areas to its wine country in Yavapai, Cochise and Santa Cruz counties.

Ideas ranged from the expected to the unexpected, including:

Water conservation, planning and management projects (City of Sedona, Prescott)

Expanding Arizona's emerging wine industry, artisanal food production and locally grown specialty crops such as pistachios, apples, green chili and cherries (Yavapai and Cochise counties)

Transforming a bus into an information technology classroom on wheels (Pima County)

Increasing the number of Native American girls pursuing education and careers in science, technology, engineering and math (Maricopa County)

Launching a school-based curriculum (GenNEXT) to give youth at three West Valley schools the knowledge and opportunity to create local solutions to community needs (Metro Phoenix)

Increasing civic involvement and citizen connection among Latino voters (Maricopa County)

Forming a trans-national council that fosters economic development on a regional basis, benefiting both Yuma County and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico (San Luis, Arizona)

Completing a regional planning initiative based on shared values and policies that advance the region by addressing land use, transportation and open space conservation (Imagine Greater Tucson)

Establishing the East Valley Technology Business Collaboratory, an alliance to provide resources for business incubators, accelerators, and their emerging entrepreneurial companies and technologies (East Valley Partnership, Maricopa County)

Creating jobs and stimulating development to attract residents to work and live in downtown Nogales (Santa Cruz County)

NEXT STEPS

The 33 semifinalists have been invited by CFA to submit a feasibility assessment. By late August, 10 finalists will be selected. Each of the 10 will receive \$5,000 to help offset the costs of developing a detailed, final proposal.

The finalists will represent their communities as honored guests September 22-23 at the 66th National Conference on Citizenship, to be held on the Phoenix and Tempe campuses of Arizona State University. The NCoC conference will feature a national roster of keynote speakers and panelists, and will include Arizona's second annual "Day of Civic Action." This will mark the first time the annual conference will be held outside of Washington, D.C.

Before year's end, five winning participants will be selected to create action plans and to jointly apply with the center for the national funding to implement the plans over a three-year period.

FIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT SELECTION COMMITTEE

1. Kristen Cambell, director, programs and new media, **National Conference on Citizenship**, Washington, D.C.
2. Panfilo Contreras, former executive director, **Arizona School Boards Association**, Phoenix, AZ
3. Paula Ellis, vice president/strategic initiatives, **The Knight Foundation**, Miami, FL
4. Cynthia Gibson, senior vice president, **The Philanthropic Initiative**, Boston, MA
5. Pat Gottfried, vice president, community investment and executive director, **University of Phoenix Foundation**, Apollo Group, Phoenix, AZ
6. Roger Hughes, executive director, **St. Luke's Health Initiatives**, Phoenix, AZ
7. Courtney Klein Johnson, director of strategic planning and development, **Greater Phoenix Economic Council**, Phoenix, AZ
8. Knox Kimberly, managing principal, **TRIADVOCATES**, Phoenix, AZ
9. Ruth McGregor, retired chief justice, **Arizona Supreme Court**, Phoenix, AZ
10. Robert Millis, executive director, **Flagstaff Forty**, and director emeritus, Lowell Observatory, Flagstaff, AZ
11. Colleen Niccum, director, community and government relations, **Raytheon Missile Systems**, Tucson, AZ
12. Steve Seleznow, president and CEO, **Arizona Community Foundation**, Phoenix, AZ
13. Michael Weiser, chairman of the board, **National Conference on Citizenship**, and general partner, Lowell Associates, LP, a private investment partnership, New York, NY

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP (NCoC)

The National Conference on Citizenship (www.ncoc.net) was founded in 1946 and chartered by Congress in 1953. Its mission is to advance the nation's civic life. In addition to the annual National Conference on Citizenship, NCoC produces "America's Civic Health Index," an annual study that measures America's civic habits across a wide range of indicators in an effort to strengthen citizen participation in their communities, states and nation. In 2010 NCoC also partnered with 13 states and the Center for the Future of Arizona to publish state civic health studies.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ARIZONA

The Center for the Future of Arizona (www.arizonafuture.org) is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit Organization. Its mission is to help Arizonans shape and define the future through an action oriented agenda focused on contemporary issues and topics critical to the state. More than a think tank, the center is an independent "do tank" that combines public-policy research with collaborative partnerships and initiatives that will create new opportunities for all Arizonans.

During the past 18 months, the center has systematically worked to embed The Arizona We Want, as a citizens' agenda, into policy planning and public discussions at both state and local levels. In addition to the Five Communities Project, the center launched the Gabe Zimmerman Public Service Awards in June, 2011 to recognize outstanding service among the more than 100,000 professional employees working in all levels of Arizona government.

For more information about The Arizona We Want Institute, the Five Communities Project and the Gabe Zimmerman Public Service Awards, visit www.TheArizonaWeWant.org.