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Economic Reporter

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY THE CITY OF MESA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FOURTH QUARTER 2014

Bridgestone opens Biorubber Research Process Center in Mesa

September 2014, Bridgestone Americas, Inc., a subsidiary of the world's largest tire and rubber manufacturer, Japan-based Bridgestone Corporation, held a grand opening for its new Biorubber Process Research Center in the Mesa Gateway area to investigate the use of the Guayule plant as an alternative natural rubber source.

The 10-acre site includes an 8,300 sq. ft. single-story office and laboratory building; a four-platform, 3,500 sq. ft. shrub prep building; a 5,500 sq. ft., two-level process building for rubber extraction, co-product and solvent recycling; and a 3,100 sq. ft. mechanical and electrical building. The facility will employ more than 30 researchers and technicians at an average annual wage of approximately \$75,000.

Guayule (pronounced Why-u-lee) is a perennial shrub native to the Southwestern U.S. and Northern Mexico. The plant produces natural rubber in its bark and roots. Natural rubber from Guayule has almost identical qualities to that harvested from the Hevea tree, which currently is the primary source for the natural rubber used in tire production. Learn more at www.tinyurl.com/BridgestoneBiorubber.



Former Fiesta District shopping center to become new office space

Phoenix Rising Investments, LLC has acquired and will renovate the Valley East Plaza Shopping Center, located at Longmore St. and Southern Ave. The remodeled complex will be known as Centrica, and is expected to be completed by early 2015. The shopping center formerly housed Bed, Bath and Beyond, Petco and Circuit City.

Centrica will feature more than 110,000 sq. ft. of single story contiguous Class A office space, more than 700 parking spots and fiber optic backbone connectivity. The location, in the heart of the Fiesta Dis-

trict, is prime real estate due to the proximity to both the U.S. 60 and Loop 101 freeways, easy access to public transit and the amenities surrounding the area. "Centrica will be within walking distance to an abundance of restaurants, retail, and educational facilities – and just a twenty-minute commute for over one million well-educated people," Michael Hsiung, Principal of Phoenix Rising Investments, LLC said.

For more information on the project, visit. www.ProjectCentrica.com.



City of Mesa swears in 40th mayor

The ceremonial swearing-in of Mesa's 40th mayor, John Giles, was held September 18 at the Mesa Arts Center. Mayor Giles takes over for Alex Finter, who served as mayor after Scott Smith left office April 2014 to run for governor.

At the event, Mayor Giles expressed his appreciation of the "Mesa of today," then shared his vision for moving Mesa to the next level. He promised to focus on economic development, education, community livability, smart growth and active participation in city government to build on the work of his predecessor.

He spoke about the success of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport area, then explained his plans for several of Mesa's other important areas including the Falcon Field Airport area, Downtown Mesa, the Fiesta District and West Mesa.

Mayor Giles announced a new blog entitled Next Mesa and stated, "Next Mesa is a way to spur conversation about finding a vision for Mesa, for moving forward, not being satisfied with the status quo, but finding improvements for our community, moving forward." Learn more about Next Mesa at www.mesamayor.com.



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The Economic Development
Advisory Board meets the first
Tuesday of every month at 7:30
AM in the Lower Level Council
Chambers (57 E. First St.). All
meetings are open to the public.



The Quick Jab *by Bill Jabjiniak*

Creating a strategic vision for Mesa economic activity areas



Falcon Field Economic Activity Area

In April, Mayor Alex Finter tasked a team of business and industry experts to develop a strategic vision for the Falcon Field Area. The key objectives were to support and retain existing on and off airport businesses, attract new businesses that supply high-quality jobs, and to protect the area from residential pressure and encroachment.

The Falcon Strategic Visioning Commission identified strengths, opportunities, untapped growth sectors, and barriers to success for the Falcon Field Economic Activity Area (FFEAA), a 35 sq. mile area between the Salt River and Brown Rd., and from Gilbert Rd. to Ellsworth Rd. The vision is for FFEAA to be recognized as a vibrant hub for aerospace, aviation, defense, sports tourism, and advanced business services such as banking, financial services, back office centers, consulting firms, accounting, as well as software development and support. The FFEAA will be positioned as a premier location for companies seeking a highly attractive, competitive operating environment in which to grow.

Accompanying this vision came a strategic action plan recommending key strategies including business attraction, retention and expansion; product development; and branding and marketing to build awareness of FFEAA's assets within key target market segments.

This strategic visioning process has given the City of Mesa and private sector partners a

clear path to develop the FFEAA. Success will be measured by the number of new quality, high-wage jobs created and the amount of capital investment in the FFEAA within the next three years. The City of Mesa Office of Economic Development is leading the implementation efforts.

www.tinyurl.com/FalconStrategy

Downtown Mesa

In September, on the heels of presenting the FFEAA Strategic Visioning Plan, Mayor Alex Finter and Vice Mayor Chris Glover announced the formation of the Downtown Vision Committee.

Light rail will be completed by fall 2015 and will transform the look, feel and accessibility of Downtown Mesa. With light rail comes the opportunity for transit-oriented development such as projects offering a mix of uses including jobs, housing, shops, restaurants and entertainment. This revitalization will also attract new businesses to locate Downtown to take advantage of the accessibility and fresh new appeal of the area.

Given the opportunities light rail will bring, now is the right time to build a strategic vision for the long-term evolution of Downtown Mesa. The committee will begin its work fall 2014 and will conclude within approximately six months. The City Manager's office is leading the coordination of this effort.

www.tinyurl.com/DowntownMesa

Mesa lands corporate HQ, 600 jobs

American Traffic Solutions (ATS), a market leader in road safety camera installations in North America, will move its corporate headquarters and 600 employees to a new office building planned at Mesa Riverview at Alma School Rd. and Bass Pro Dr. in northwest Mesa.

Arizona developers, Lincoln Property Co. and Harvard Investments are building the 250,000 sq. ft. Waypoint office complex, which will complete the partially built Riverview Point Office Park. ATS will occupy 108,000 sq. ft. in the smaller building of the two-building Waypoint complex.

The new facility will allow ATS to bring its fleet services and government solutions business units into one location, according to company CEO James Tuton. The company expects to add as many as 170 more employees at the location by 2017.

Learn more about the company at www.atsol.com.

Boulder Boats brings 30 jobs to Mesa

Boulder Boats, a Las Vegas-based boat dealer, will open its first Arizona dealership at 33 W. Broadway Rd. in Mesa. The dealership, planning to open in November, will employ 30 people at an average annual wage of \$40,000. The company will occupy two acres and more than 24,000 sq. ft. of showroom and service space. Boulder Boats is recognized as one of the highest volume dealers of new and used boats in the Western U.S. The company will be Arizona's exclusive dealer for Malibu Boats and Axis Wake Research.

Started in 2004 by Stuart and Kristina Litjens, the family-owned dealership offers an extensive inventory of new and pre-owned boats, a full service department and a pro-shop. Nearly half of the company's sales are from international buyers. Learn more at www.boulderboats.com.



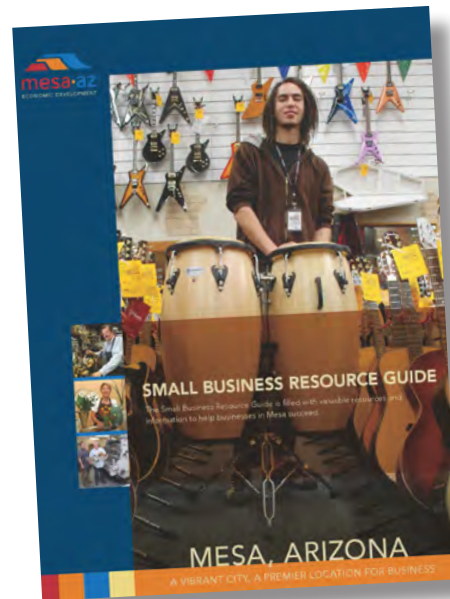
New industrial and warehouse spec space coming to Mesa

New industrial space coming to Mesa Gateway area

Cavan Commercial, which developed Camelback Corporate Center in Phoenix and Kierland Executive Center in Scottsdale, plans to build a 120,000 sq. ft. multi-tenant industrial building at the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport across from the headquarters of Able Engineering. The \$13 million project is expected to be completed end of 2015. www.cavancommercial.com

New warehouse space planned for West Mesa

Pacific Realty Advisors plans on building a 211,500 sq. ft. speculative warehouse complex in West Mesa at the northwest corner of Broadway Rd. and Dobson Rd. as part of the Broadway 101 Commerce Park. The two-building warehouse complex will occupy 16 acres. www.prainc.net



Small Business Resource Guide targeted to help Mesa businesses succeed

The City of Mesa Office of Economic Development (Mesa OED) has recently published the Mesa Small Business Resource Guide. The guide provides Mesa businesses and start-ups a vast array of valuable resources and contacts that will assist them in succeeding in today's competitive business environment. The guide features information and links to free resources and topics such as how to structure a business, regulatory issues, taxation, licensing, business counseling and more.

The guide was designed as a one-stop shop for assisting Mesa's business community to grow and expand as part of Mesa OED's mission.

See the guide at www.tinyurl.com/MesaSmallBusinessResourceGuide.

Mesa Office of Economic Development launches Fiesta and Downtown investment maps

New investment and activity is on the rise in both the Fiesta District and Downtown Mesa. The Fiesta District has attracted more than \$400 million in public and private investment over the last five years. This includes the new Project Centrica building, a \$10 million renovation of a vacant retail plaza into a high-tech 110,000 sq. ft. Class A office space.

Because of increased interest in the Fiesta and Downtown Districts, the City of Mesa Office of Economic Development has created maps of both areas depicting recent investments. The maps illustrate the areas' resurgence as desirable business locations. The maps can be found online:

- Fiesta District Investment Map:
www.tinyurl.com/FiestaInvestmentMap
- Downtown District Investment Map:
www.tinyurl.com/DowntownInvestmentMap

Mesa Educates **U**

Higher Education Roundup

ATSU, Mesa Youth Football League chosen for pilot test to improve youth sports safety

A.T. Still University's (ATSU) Athletic Training (AT) program has been selected by MomsTEAM Institute, a leading youth sports health and safety think-tank and watchdog group, for a pilot program of MomsTEAM's innovative SmartTeam™ initiative.

ATSU

A.T. STILL
UNIVERSITY

The pilot program will focus on sports injury and concussion risk management associated with the Mesa Youth Football League. ATSU marks one of only six programs nationwide.

The Mesa Youth Football League will be coordinated by ATSU's athletic training director, Tamara McLeod, PhD, ATC, FNATA, and students of the AT program, and will be modeled on the community-centric approach to improving youth sports safety highlighted in MomsTEAM's PBS documentary, "The Smartest Team: Making High School Football Safer."

Over the course of the fall 2014 football season, Dr. McLeod and ATSU students will provide parents, coaches and officials in the Mesa Youth Football League program with ongoing education on how they and their child's program can help keep them safe. www.atsu.edu

Benedictine at Mesa doubles enrollment for second year

This fall, the University began its second academic year at its Mesa branch campus with more than 200 students – more than doubling its enrollment since the school opened its doors in fall 2013. One reason for the strong enrollment increase is the University's commitment to making higher education affordable and attainable by providing as much financial assistance as possible to those in need so that a private, Catholic education can become a reality for them.

The University offers generous merit- and need-based scholarships and recently established the Benedictine Promise Award – a \$10,000 tuition award applied during the second semester of students' senior year.

Student-athletes have begun competing in men's and women's cross country, golf, tennis and volleyball this fall as the Benedictine University at Mesa "Redhawks."

Applications are being accepted for the spring 2015 Semester, which begins January 12.



Learn more at ben.edu/mesa or Gillett Hall at 225 E. Main St. in Downtown Mesa, or contact 602.888.5533 or www.ben.edu/mesa.



Mesa Community College opens performing arts center

Mesa Community College's (MCC) Southern and Dobson campus is expanding and enhancing the Fiesta District by bringing new investment and an exciting array of quality and affordable entertainment, culture and art.

New construction and remodeling projects, funded through the Bond Initiative approved by Maricopa County voters in 2004, are being completed with celebrations planned. First, the public open house of the \$15 million Performing Arts Center (PAC) will be held October 25, followed by spring grand opening festivities for the new Art Gallery. This new investment in cultural and educational assets will generate additional momentum for development and attract new audiences to Mesa's Fiesta District.

Children-friendly and other popular plays are presented in the newly remodeled MCC Theatre starting October 11, with the family-favorite *Rumpelstiltskin* and ending May 9 with the Southern classic *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Retro, fun *Hairspray* rocks the PAC stage November 13-22.

MCC's 50th anniversary in 2015 heralds the opening of the new Kirk Student Center/Student Services Village and one-stop Enrollment Center, which brings together five existing, adjacent buildings with an air-conditioned atrium for student comfort and convenience. Find out more at www.mesacc.edu.

NAU offers business administration degree at MCC's Southern & Dobson campus

Beginning this fall, students pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) may take 300- and 400-level courses offered by Northern Arizona University (NAU) at Mesa Community College's Southern and Dobson campus.

"We are pleased to have an NAU advisor on campus to assist MCC students in determining if NAU's business administration programs are a good fit and helping with the transfer process," said Preston Cameron, Dean of Mesa Community College's Career & Technical Education programs. "As we enhance transfer and completion initiatives, NAU's

accredited programs will enable our business students to receive a high-quality four-year education in an economical environment. We enthusiastically support this partnership.”

“We’re thrilled to be working with the largest community college in Maricopa County,” said Dr. Jason Myrowitz, an assistant professor with NAU-Extended Campuses’ BBA program. “Our partnership with Mesa Community College’s Business Department will help to strengthen NAU’s business program and better serve all students.”

Maricopa County Community College District has articulated transfer agreements with NAU and other state universities, allowing the colleges and universities to work together to assist students in obtaining a Bachelor degree. www.mesacc.edu, www.ec.nau.edu/AZCampuses/Mesa

NAU ranked among best for VETS

Northern Arizona University (NAU) recently partnered with Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) to create the Air University Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative (AU-ABC) program. The AU-ABC program is an agreement between NAU and CCAF allowing students to transfer credit earned through CCAF to a bachelor’s degree program at NAU. This AU-ABC partnership enables students to earn a bachelor’s degree from an accredited, military-friendly university at the Mesa campus and with convenient online degree options.



NAU also offers to active-duty military and veteran students special services including military counseling, priority enrollment, tuition equal to the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance rates for active duty, full in-state tuition assistance under the VA Education Programs, and waived application fee for undergraduate degrees.

NAU has been recognized for providing quality education and services to veteran students. Recently, Military Times named NAU among its BEST for VETS: Colleges 2014 rankings. www.nau.edu

Wilkes to offer bachelor’s degrees in business

Starting in January 2015, Wilkes University will offer undergraduate degrees in business with majors in accounting, entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, management and sports and event management. These are the first bachelor’s degrees that Wilkes will offer in Mesa.

Undergraduate business degrees developed by Wilkes University’s Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership provide students with a strong liberal arts focus throughout their coursework, as well as significant opportunities for hands-on learning while being mentored by experienced faculty.

Financial aid and scholarships are available to those who qualify. Learn more by calling Ryan Hess at 480.878.4407. www.wilkes.edu/Mesa



Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute helps Arizona businesses compete

The Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AzAMI) was created to help Arizona business and industry partners stay competitive and provide a pipeline of skilled and educated employees. This effort was made possible by a four-year, \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration received by Mesa Community College (MCC). This grant will assist in building MCC’s capacity to provide a comprehensive and holistic program aimed at meeting the industry needs for advanced manufacturing companies. Core programs include Electronics, Drafting, Automation and Machining, and Welding. MCC will also be offering dual credit partnerships with local high schools for welding and machine programs.

Leah Palmer, Executive Director of AzAMI states, “AzAMI will be a comprehensive regional manufacturing resource that meets the education and training needs of today’s as well as tomorrow’s workforce. If there are resources requested that we cannot accommodate, we will bring our committed partners to the table to be engaged in finding solutions.”

Learn more at www.mesacc.edu/workforce-development/azami or email AzAMI@mesacc.edu.

Mesa receives international award for Higher Education Initiative

The City of Mesa’s Office of Economic Development has been honored with the International Downtown Association (IDA) Award for the City’s Higher Education Initiative. IDA announced the award on September 4, 2014 during its 60th Anniversary Conference and Tradeshow in Ottawa, Canada.

Submitted projects and initiatives in the category of Economic and Business Development came from organizations working to further their city centers by delivering successful programs and strategies that have recruited new businesses or improved retention efforts in downtown; recruiting new sectors of the economy to downtown; and creating or enhancing economic development efforts through creative financing, unique operating strategies, or public-private partnership.



The Higher Education Initiative was a strategic effort to recruit legacy institutions of higher education to Downtown Mesa and resulted in the City’s recruitment of Albright College, Benedictine University, Upper Iowa University and Wilkes University, and the adaptive reuse of two Downtown buildings as campuses for two of the institutions.

The Washington D.C.-based IDA is a champion for vital and livable urban centers and strives to inform, influence, and inspire downtown leaders and advocates. www.ida-downtown.org

American Truck Showrooms brings new dealership to Mesa

American Truck Showrooms recently announced the opening of its third dealership location, its first in the American West. The new dealership is located in Mesa's Falcon Field Economic Activity Area at 1645 N. 46th St. The company also has locations in Gulfport, MS and Atlanta, GA.

American Truck Showrooms rents certified pre-owned trucks with an option to purchase. According to Rick Carpenter, the general manager of the new Mesa location, the location is ideal for the high traffic of trucks using the I-10 Freeway. Its location is very suitable for moving cargo north and south in the Western United States and for trucks traveling from California all the way through Florida. www.americantruckshowrooms.com



OneSource Virtual to create 120 jobs with new Mesa office

OneSource Virtual (OneSource), a leading cloud-based Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) provider, announced it is opening a processing facility that will create approximately 120 jobs in Mesa by the end of 2015. The new office will allow OneSource to strategically service an established and growing customer base in the Pacific and Mountain Time Zones through expanded hours of operations.



The office is located in Riverview Point Office Park, 1146 N. Alma School Rd., Suite 200 and spans 21,182 sq. ft. The location in Mesa was chosen for its close proximity to the Pacific Time Zone and

for the projected strength and sustainability of the labor market over the next five years, according to Wesley Bryan, president, COO and co-founder of OneSource Virtual. www.onesourcevirtual.com

Mesa announces the Business Academy at LAUNCHPOINT

The City of Mesa, in partnership with Arizona State University (ASU), has announced the Business Academy at LAUNCHPOINT, a free program to train entrepreneurs in a variety of methodologies, to validate business ideas, and to position their companies for funding opportunities. The Business Academy at LAUNCHPOINT began accepting applications August 22. The first cohort will start fall 2014 and run through May 2015, and will be held

at LAUNCHPOINT, 6113 S. Kent St., Mesa, AZ 85212. All entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply for this free program. First review of applications was held September 15.

"The participants will be directed through an eight-month, structured program designed in partnership with ASU that will give entrepreneurs the competitive edge when pursuing funding opportunities," said Shea Joachim, senior project manager with City of Mesa Office of Economic Development.

LAUNCHPOINT will provide each participant with free private office space and furniture, business center access, phone and Internet service, 24/7 facility access, on-site parking and mail service.

For more information and to apply, visit www.mesaaccelerator.com.

First Solar seeking approval to build test farm in Mesa

Solar-panel manufacturer First Solar is seeking approval from the City of Mesa to develop a 20-acre test farm in southeast Mesa at 80th St. and Germann Rd., just south of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The company will also be leasing a 20,000 sq. ft. facility just north of the test farm. The \$20 million project is expected to include 20 jobs at an average wage of \$65,000. The employees will be relocated from First Solar's former Mesa property at Signal Butte Rd. and Elliot Rd that was sold to Apple Inc. www.firstsolar.com

Mesa in top 10 cities for working parents

Mesa was recently ranked 10th best city in the nation for working parents according to a study conducted by NerdWallet and Business Insider. The study measured affordability, child care costs, school quality and family-friendliness. Gilbert received the number one ranking, while Chandler ranked number three. Read more at www.tinyurl.com/CitiesForWorkingParents.



Mesa's Empire Southwest, 2nd largest family-owned business in Arizona

According to recent lists published by the Phoenix Business Journal, Mesa's Empire Southwest with more than 1,400 employees was ranked the 2nd largest family-owned business and the 6th largest privately-owned business in Arizona.

The company was founded by Jack Whiteman in 1950. Today the company is run by third-generation Chairman



and CEO Jeffrey S. Whiteman and ranks among the top Caterpillar dealers in the world. Empire Southwest is currently completing the 90,000 sq. ft. expansion of its Mesa facility and adding a two-story, 25,000 sq. ft. office area that will contain Empire's fluids lab and 10 service and support teams. Learn more at www.empire-cat.com.



Hacienda Healthcare breaks ground on new children's hospital in Mesa

On September 22, Hacienda Healthcare broke ground on Mesa's newest children's hospital. The hospital will provide a complementary resource that has been embraced by Phoenix-Mesa metro area hospitals providing pediatric care. The hospital will feature 24 private rooms, child-friendly décor, four themed children's indoor/outdoor areas, and be built as one level. The hospital does not provide emergency care or walk-in medical care and thus has a much lower daily rate. The hospital was recently awarded a City of Mesa Community Block Development Grant to begin the construction.

Several years ago, Hacienda HealthCare was asked by East Valley physicians, parents, hospital CEOs, and health care plans to establish a children's hospital similar to its Phoenix Los Niños Hospital. Smaller, intimate, and more homelike, the new hospital will provide specialized transitional acute, sub-acute, and rehabilitative care for medically-fragile/complex children. Many of these children ages birth to 17, may be on ventilators, and have trachs and feeding tubes. Although the emergency or surgery may be over, the time and specialty care needed for healing may only be beginning. Hacienda's model is to provide to exceptional care over time, and to provide hands-on education to parents on how to care for their medically-fragile child.

Learn more about Hacienda Healthcare at www.haciendahealthcare.org.

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport announces runway reconstruction, new routes for Allegiant

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport announced that it is in the process of reconstructing the first 3,000 feet of Runway 30 Left. With three runways at Gateway Airport, passenger service has not experienced delays as a result of the project. The reconstructed runway will fully reopen in December 2014. The project will cost \$6,558,000 and will create 70 jobs at the peak of construction.



Gateway Airport also announced that Allegiant will begin new fall service two times per week to Cincinnati, OH, and has expanded Provo, UT service from four flights per week to five due to popular demand. www.phxmesagateway.org

Groundbreaking held for El Rancho Apartments in Downtown Mesa

A groundbreaking was held in August for El Rancho Apartments, 719 E. Main St., on the site of a blighted motel that will become a four-story apartment community with 66 units to house families with children. The \$13.6 million El Rancho development is a collaboration led by Community Development Partners (CDP) with the City of Mesa, Arizona Department of Housing, non-profit partner Integrity Housing, and supportive service provider A New Leaf, with the goal of providing life-enhancing safe, quality affordable housing in Downtown Mesa.



The El Rancho project pooled input from local groups including A New Leaf, Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO) and Cultural Coalition, as well as the Mesa Arts Center and local artists to design a product that will engage the community with enriching programs and public art pieces. In addition to the public art spaces, there is also a large communal gallery, a flexible studio space for children's service programming, a media room, computer lab, an outdoor eating area, a community garden (in cooperation with Mesa Urban Garden) and a pool.

Financing for the project comes from the sale of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which the project was awarded in 2013. A construction loan from Chase Bank will finance the project through lease-up. Arizona Department of Housing provided gap financing and the City of Mesa provided both a grant and loan through Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) funds, without which the project would not be feasible.

For more information, contact Tim Winger, Community Development Partners Media Relations, at 310.801.2404 or twinger@communitydevpartners.com.

Mesa hosts two export training events

The City of Mesa, Town of Gilbert and the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) hosted "Global Connect: Expanding through Export" at the Hilton Phoenix/Mesa on September 30. The free three-hour workshop attracted more than 50 small- to medium-sized businesses and featured experts in the fields of foreign trade zones, export financing, intellectual property, international distribution, shipping and customs, and doing business in Canada and Mexico.

Mesa and the ACA will also host the upcoming ExporTech Boot Camp, an event running October 17, November 14 and December 5. The accelerated three-day program provides participants customized training with individualized coaching from a team of experts. At the end of the series, each business will graduate with an international Marketing/Export strategy; additionally, Mesa companies that complete the program may be eligible for a 50 percent reimbursement of their registration costs.

For more information on ExporTech Boot Camp, email Kenneth.Chapa@MesaAz.gov or visit www.mesaaz.gov/Economic/ExporTechWorkshop.aspx.

City of Mesa Office of Economic Development

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www.mesaaz.gov/economic

EVENTS



OCTOBER

- 1 **East Valley Business Expo**
Mesa Convention Center
201 N. Center St., Mesa, AZ
2-6 PM
www.eastvalleybusinessexpo.com
- 2 **Courtyard by Marriott
Groundbreaking**
6907 E. Ray Road
Mesa, AZ
9:30 – 10:30 AM
- 9 **GPEC Annual Dinner**
Sheraton Phoenix
Downtown Hotel
340 N. 3rd Street
Phoenix, AZ
5:30 PM
<http://www.gpec.org/node/930>
- 14 **AAED Phoenix Luncheon – Power
of Infrastructure – Energizing
Economic Development**
2901 N. 7th St.
Phoenix, AZ
11:30 AM - 1:15 PM
www.aaed.com/event/AAEDOct14th
- 18 **Celebrate Mesa**
Red Mountain Soccer Complex
905 N. Sun Valley Blvd.
Mesa, AZ
5-9 PM
www.mesaaz.gov/celebratemesa
- 19-22 **IEDC Annual Conference**
Fort Worth, TX
www.iedcevents.org/annualconference

NOVEMBER

- 11 **Veterans Day**
City offices closed

DECEMBER

- 25 **Christmas Day**
City offices closed

Visit Mesa launches “City Limitless” on China’s social media services

Visit Mesa recently kicked off overseas marketing efforts to target the Chinese visitor. The marketing outreach began in the spring with a direct marketing advertisement in the Chinese consumer publication, *Essentially America China*, which was distributed to nearly 400,000 consumers and Visa applicants. The magazine has the largest distribution of any print and digital publication in China.

Another targeted promotion with *Essentially America* will be launched this fall and tied to a social media campaign in China on their



popular site, Weibo (equivalent to Twitter in the United States) and Youku (the Chinese counterpart to

You Tube). The sweepstakes promotes the Mesa Cowboy Experience and invites Chinese citizens to take a ‘selfie’ and tag Visit Mesa in their online posts. Each post will be counted as an entry for a Grand Prize vacation to Arizona. The Grand Prize winner will receive two roundtrip tickets for them and a guest with a 3-night/4-day experience in Mesa and the surrounding region. It’s estimated that more than 30 percent of all Chinese internet users have established accounts on Weibo (more than 500 million), and each day more than 100 million messages are sent using the microblogging service.

In addition, Visit Mesa also started a public relations campaign targeting Chinese media outlets including high-end lifestyle magazines, as well as online newspaper sites. As part of this effort, Visit Mesa will also distribute five Mesa travel articles directed to Chinese consumers through targeted e-mail blasts.

The expected economic impact from Chinese tourists is astounding. According to *The Economist*, nearly one in ten international tourists worldwide is Chinese. More than 97 million outward-bound journeys originated from China last year, of which approximately half were for leisure. Chinese tourists spend the most in total (\$129 billion in 2013, followed by Americans at \$86 billion) and per tax-free transaction (\$1,130 compared with \$494 by

Russians). More than 80 percent say that shopping is vital to their plans, compared with 56 percent of Middle Eastern tourists and 48 percent of Russians. They are expected to buy more luxury goods next year while abroad than tourists from all other countries combined.

Learn more at www.VisitMesa.com.

Ken Chapa

Ken Chapa is a Project Manager with the City of Mesa Office of Economic Development.

Previously, he served 12 years at the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), formerly the Arizona Department of Commerce, where he directed the efforts of the State Film Office, recruited companies to metro and rural Arizona, and supported small community development efforts. His work at ACA included attraction projects such as General Motors, Bridgestone Americas, Franklin Foods, and Accelerate Technologies, to name a few.

In Mesa, Ken will be leading the implementation efforts of the Falcon Field Economic Activity Area Strategic Plan among other project management and business development efforts.



He is a graduate of Arizona State University, receiving a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Contact Ken at 480.644.4896 or Ken.Chapa@mesaaz.gov.



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-  • LinkedIn @ City of Mesa Office of Economic Development
- www.mesaaz.gov/economic