

City of Willcox Newsletter June 2009

Volunteers Needed for 2010 Census - a Positive Revenue Impact!

Pat McCourt, City Manager

Every ten years, the United States Government takes a census (or head count) of all the people in the United States, where they live, and usually some other information like age, gender, etc. The Census does NOT check citizenship, work permits, or legal status.

The City of Willcox is interested in getting an accurate count of those people who live within the City of Willcox. The reason the City is interested is that a large amount of the State Shared money the City receives is based upon the population count that the Census takes. This is then used for the next ten years to determine how much of our tax dollars that we pay to the State of Arizona come back to be used here in Willcox for our benefit.

The City would like to form a group of people to work over the next nine – ten months to maximize the headcount here in Willcox.

If you would like to make an impact on our City and the welfare of our people for the next ten years, please contact Pat McCourt at 384-4271 or pmccourt@willcoxcity.org about serving on this task force.

New Policies on Use of Public Facilities – What is This?

Pat McCourt, Willcox City Manager

The City of Willcox is considering adopting new policies of the use of Public facilities. The first question is: *What does this mean?* The City has many pieces of property, such as streets, parks and buildings. Some of these are used strictly for City operations, like the wastewater treatment plant, others are used for the general public, like parks, and some have mixed use, like the meeting rooms in city buildings.

As the City has grown, there is an increasing demand on the available facilities, so the questions become: *Who gets to use what? What does the City do if there is a request by two or more groups to use the same space at the same or overlapping times? Who does the Public contact if they want to use some space for their function?*

These questions arise regularly. At the current time, the answer to the question may vary, depending on who is asked the question. This is because staff change, how one person may see the request can be different than how another person hears the request, or the understanding of the staff person on how the City responds to requests can vary, and two staff people in different offices could inadvertently both schedule the same space for two different groups. At this time, the question is answered by staff as they understand the question.

A Policy is a direction from the City Council. Your elected officials should be making the decision on these questions, but currently, each time somebody wants to use some space, it is difficult, and takes a lot of time to take each request to the City Council, because they only meet twice a month. Therefore, to make sure the Staff are doing what the Public wants, and doing it in a timely fashion, a Policy is put in place.

You can view the drafts of the Policies (they are drafts until the City Council approves them) on the City website at www.cityofwillcox.org and then click on “Draft Policies on the Use of Public Facilities”, or come by City Hall, or visit the Library and review them at your leisure.

WHERE DO 9-1-1 CALLS GO?

Chief Jake Weaver, Willcox Department of Public Safety

Recently, I have had several questions from concerned citizens who have asked me if they make a 9-1-1 call from their cell phone, *where does it go?* The answer is quite simple. It's anybody's guess. Cell phones are obviously different from traditional "land lines" in the sense that the signal from a cell phone travels through the air and has to "bounce" from a tower to a call center where it can be received, whereas a traditional phone uses dedicated lines established for receiving emergency or non-emergency calls, and are routed to the appropriate agency for that geographical area. When using a cell phone, there is no guarantee that if you dial 9-1-1, that your call will be received by the 9-1-1 center of the local police/fire dispatch center for the community you are in. Unfortunately, many times the call will go to a dispatch center belonging to another agency, sometimes even in another state. If you are using a cell phone exclusively, then it is best to program the local number of the police/fire dispatch center directly into your phone and place it on speed dial, that way you will at least be able to contact the agency for the area you are in, saving valuable time in an emergency that otherwise might be wasted while another agency attempts to contact the appropriate agency to respond to the emergency. If traveling on highways, program the numbers of the highway patrol dept. for that state ahead of time. Another problem is the dropped call. Cell phones can lose their signal and drop a call, which again delays the response, and can have tragic results. While cell phones are an asset, they do have limitations, and anyone who uses them should be aware of those limitations and take the necessary steps to reduce the likelihood of these limitations occurring, by checking with their service provider, and reading the owner's manual for the phone they have purchased.