

**INTRODUCTORY  
REDISTRICTING MEETING**

**MARCH 10, 2011  
PAYSON LIBRARY  
PAYSON, AZ**

**CITIZENS AWARENESS COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2011

### County redistricting explained at CAC meeting

If you want to stay informed as the redistricting process unfolds, you'll want to attend the next Citizens Awareness Committee (CAC) meeting on Thursday, March 10, 2 p.m. at the Payson Library.

The guest speaker will be:

Linda Eastlick  
Director of Gila County  
Division of Elections

The Topic will be:

"What is Redistricting and what is the Importance of doing it? "

CAC meetings are open to the public. Come to this meeting to learn more about this important but controversial topic.

(Scroll down to read a *Gazette Blog* editorial on the subject.)

Posted by Jim Keyworth at [8:01 AM](#) [0 comments](#)

# Clubs and Organizations - Payson Roundup

## **C.A.C. hears about redistricting**

The Citizens Awareness Committee will host Linda Eastlick, director of Gila County division of elections, at 2 p.m., Thursday, March 10 at the meeting room of the Payson Public Library..

Eastlick will discuss what redistricting is and its importance.

Beginning in March, the CAC will have only one meeting per month, either the second or fourth Thursday, depending on speaker preference.

There has been a decline in attendance over the past few months in spite of timely topics and good speakers. An attendance of more than 10 to 15 people is needed to make a meeting viable.

# CITIZENS AWARENESS COMMITTEE MEETING PRESENTATION

2:00 pm, March 9, 2011

Payson Public Library

## What is Redistricting and What is the Importance of Doing it - RIGHT

Introduction	Linda Eastlick Tony Sissons	Voting Rights Act Redistricting
--------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------

Redistricting is

- The redrawing of United States "district" lines
- "Redistribution" of the population into "districts"
- Following changes in population as determined in the decennial census.

Successful redistricting can only be accomplished by:

- Adhering to Federal Law
- Gathering and considering public input
- Performing extensive statistical analysis of enormous amounts of data
- Creating a legal plan

Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution

**Section 1.** The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

**Section 2.** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Landmark legislation - outlawed discriminatory voting practices.
- Echoes the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment - prohibits imposing any "voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure...to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the US to vote on account of race or color."
- Act established extensive Federal oversight
- Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act
  - Forbids any voting standard, practice, or procedure from having the effect of reducing the opportunity of members of a covered minority to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.

-Prohibits practices resulting in

- **“Cracking”** - fragmenting concentrations of minority populations and dispersing them among other districts to dilute minority opportunity to elect candidates of their choice
  - **“Stacking”** - combining concentrations of minority populations with greater concentrations of white population to prevent minority opportunities to elect candidates of their choice
  - **“Packing”** - over-concentrating minorities in as few districts as possible to minimize the number of districts in which minorities constitute a numerical majority
- **Section 5** of the Voting Rights Act
    - Requires “preclearance” in states with history of discriminatory voting practices
  - What does that mean
    - A jurisdiction covered by Section 5 cannot implement ANY voting change without Department of Justice approval
  - Why does it matter?
    - Because the entire State of Arizona is a covered jurisdiction
  - How does that relate to Redistricting?
    - Redistricting is a voting change
    - Gila County’s Redistricting Plan implementation is contingent upon DOJ approval
    - Gila County will submit a legal plan that complies with Federal law.

## Gila County, Arizona Redistricting of Supervisor Districts

An Overview of the Process  
Tony Sissons

### The consultants

- Two firms will serve as legal and process consultants to the Gila County Redistricting Committee
- Federal Compliance Consulting LLC, Potomac, Maryland
  - Bruce L. Adelson, Esq., CEO
- Research Advisory Services, Inc., Phoenix, Arizona
  - Tony Sissons, President

2

### DOJ Expert Bruce Adelson

- Former U. S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division senior attorney
- Team leader for review of all Arizona redistricting submissions in 2000
- Bruce Adelson will:
  - Examine DOJ files on Gila County
  - Advise on strategy to avoid retrogression
  - Provide an "Insider" view of new DOJ regulations and procedures
  - Advise on the content of Gila County's application for DOJ preclearance

3

### Redistricting Expert Tony Sissons

- Has managed 17 successful city and county redistricting processes
- Of those 17 plans:
  - All were precleared by the U. S. Department of Justice on first submission
  - None were ever challenged in court
- Tony Sissons will:
  - Provide technical and procedural assistance to Gila County staff and redistricting committee

4

### Why does Gila County have to redistrict?

- U. S. Constitution, under the principle of "one person, one vote" requires that the districts from which we elect representatives be equal in population
- We must redistrict after every decennial census and whenever there is a change in the number of districts

5

### Population Issues

- Official state estimate of Gila County population in 2009: 57,204 persons
- Increase of 11.4% since 2000
- Each supervisor district ideal size: 19,068 persons (estimate)
- Measurement includes all persons, regardless of age, eligibility to vote, or citizenship

6

### Population Variance

- In the past, district populations could vary as much as 10% without explanation
- Federal court decision in a 2004 Georgia case may have reduced the allowable variance (Larios v. Cox)
- Block-level redistricting allows flexibility to achieve small variance

7

### Race and Ethnicity Issues

- To comply with the federal Voting Rights Act, Gila County must draw new districts that have "neither the purpose, nor the effect, of diluting the voting strength of racial, origin, or language minority populations"
- To avoid "retrogression" in minority voting strength, we have to understand the "benchmark" minority proportions that DOJ will be using.

8

### Race and Ethnicity Issues

- DOJ looks at the minority proportions that exist today (2010 Census) in the most recently precleared districts, not at the proportions that existed when the districts were drawn
- We won't know those proportions until the 2010 Census data arrives in March, 2011

9

### Race and Ethnicity Issues

- In 2000, voting-age minority proportions were:
  - District 1 – 5.94%
  - District 2 – 28.48%
  - District 3 – 47.70%
- None of the districts were "minority-majority", but District 3 was close
- Will population shifts during the decade now require drawing a minority-majority district? The 2010 Census will tell

10

### Redistricting Principles

- As a result of laws and court cases, certain common "district design" rules have evolved
- In some circumstances, these rules can conflict with each other
- It is up to the Board of Supervisors to prioritize how they want the "districting principles" applied
- The discussion and adoption of those priorities should be in a public session

11

### Common Redistricting Principles -- New districts should:

- Be substantially equal in population
- Not harm minority voting rights

#### Then always "to the extent practicable"

- Be compact
- Be contiguous
- Preserve communities of interest
- Respect political subdivisions

12

### Less Common Principles --

- Districts should preserve the cores of prior districts
- Districts should (or should not) be drawn to protect incumbent elected officials
- Districts should be politically competitive
- Districts should not split existing voting precincts or Census Tracts
- District boundaries should use visible geographic features

13

### The Public Involvement Process

- The courts and DOJ want this to be an assertively public process
- The public record should clearly demonstrate that Gila County paid attention to its residents and did not just "give lip-service" to public input

14

### Preliminary Studies

- Examine, map and document the physical and demographic makeup of Gila County
- Examine County records and USDOJ files to get a complete picture of the County's preclearance history
- Catalog recent state, county and city election results at the precinct level
  - Voter turnout
  - Race or Ethnicity of candidates
  - Winners' vote margins

15

### When the Census Data Arrives

- Determine the population, race and ethnicity values in the current districts
- Determine the size of population shifts necessary to equalize districts
- Determine the minority race proportions in each current district
- Determine the permissible population movements necessary to equalize district populations without diminishing minority voting strength
- Examine the magnitude and extent of any racially-polarized voting

16

### Outreach to Community Leaders

- Talk with key community leaders
  - Explain the process
  - Determine their expectations
  - Encourage their participation and leadership
- Develop a contact list of people and organizations suggested by key leaders

17

### Prepare Public Information Materials

- Maps illustrating topics examined in the preliminary studies
- Information handouts or booklets describing various aspects of the redistricting process
- Citizen Redistricting Kits
  - Printed booklet of instructions, data and foldout base-maps
  - Interactive redistricting map on the Internet

18



### Initial meetings with Supervisors

- Formal "Work-study" session with elected officials
  - Discuss process, legal setting, roles, responsibilities
  - Discuss "districting principles"
  - Obtain Supervisors' direction on priority ranking of districting principles
- Individual Meetings with Board Members and staffs
  - Obtain input on possible or preferred configurations of districts

19

### First Round Resident Workshops

- Three meetings, one in each current district
  - 30 minutes to view exhibits, socialize
  - Short presentation on scope, purpose, process, timelines, legal issues
  - Stress that no maps have been drawn yet – that the request for input is genuine
  - Invite citizens to draw their perceptions of "communities of interest" important to them on tracing paper laid over County maps

20

### Draw and Publish Alternate Plans

- Analyze plans and community-of-interest maps submitted by citizens
- Prepare 3 or 4 alternate plans, based on:
  - Themes or suggestions from elected officials
  - Recurrent themes heard from open-house participants
  - Maps of districts or communities of interest submitted by citizens
- Publish proposed alternate plans

21

### Second Round Resident Workshops

- Three meetings, one in each current district
  - 30 minutes to view exhibits, socialize
  - Short formal presentation
  - Describe features of each plan
  - Stress the extent to which plans incorporate ideas gathered in various public-input settings
  - Describe ways for citizens to register their views, or choices of plans or plan features
- Consultants and staff answer questions

22

### Prepare and Publish Final Plan

- Consultants will prepare final versions of two or three plans for consideration by the Board of Supervisors
- Plans displayed on County's website and in newspaper ads
- Public invited to send in comments and to attend the plan adoption meeting

23

### Adoption of Plan

- Consultants and staff present plans to Board of Supervisors at a meeting held specifically for that purpose
- Consultant team's preclearance expert examines the adopted plan for compliance with new DOJ Section 5 regulations
- Consultants prepare preclearance application files and exhibits requested by the County Attorney

24

## Redistricting and the Voting Rights Act

Linda Eastlick

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

- ▶ Landmark legislation which outlawed discriminatory voting practices
- ▶ Established extensive Federal oversight of voting

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

▶ SECTION 2

Prohibits imposing any "voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure...to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color"

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

Forbids any voting standard, practice, or procedure from having the effect of reducing the opportunity of members of a covered minority to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

Prohibits practices resulting in

Cracking  
Stacking  
Packing

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

**"Cracking"**

Fragmenting concentrations of minority populations and dispersing them among other districts to dilute minority opportunity to elect candidates of their choice.

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

**"Stacking"**  
Combining concentrations of minority populations with greater concentrations of white population to prevent minority opportunities to elect candidates of their choice

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

**"Packing"**  
Over-concentrating minorities in as few districts as possible to minimize the number of districts in which minorities constitute a numerical majority.

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

▸ SECTION 5  
Requires "preclearance" in jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory voting practices

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

What does that mean?  
A jurisdiction covered by Section 5 cannot implement ANY voting change without Department of Justice approval.

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

Why does it matter?  
Because the entire State of Arizona is a covered jurisdiction

### Voting Rights Act of 1965

How does that relate to Redistricting?  
✓ Redistricting is a voting change  
✓ Redistricting Plan is subject to DOJ review  
✓ Plan cannot be implemented without DOJ approval