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Archive for Friday, December 17, 2010

Archive for Friday, December 17, 2010

## Action on implementing redistricting process postponed

By Teresa McQuerrey

December 17, 2010

Email Post a comment Print

Gila County Board of Supervisors will wait another month before they start moving toward redistricting.

At the Dec. 14 meeting the supervisors were to adopt a resolution to establish guidelines for the selection of a citizens redistricting committee.

The proposed resolution calls for the committee to be seated by Feb. 28.

Linda Eastlick, with the county elections department, asked the board to postpone acting on the resolution so the guidelines can be refined to not only establish the committee's duties and responsibilities, but to also clearly state it is an advisory committee and how the county will go about creating the application process for citizens who wish to serve.

The board agreed to postpone the matter until Tuesday, Jan. 18. According to state law, redistricting in counties may be done at any time, but it must be done following the completion of the federal census.

Once established, the redistricting committee — working with the county elections department, the supervisors and the county's consultants — will obtain public input, hold public hearings and review alternative redistricting plans.

The supervisor districts must have equal populations (with not more than 10 percent difference) and special voting groups cannot be diluted. District One Supervisor Tommie Martin explained in Gila County that means not diluting the voter base on the San Carlos Reservation or the Hispanic population in the southern part of the county.

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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Do you think the current Fossil creek plan is a good idea?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided
- Needs more study
- Don't do anything

or see results

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Archive for Tuesday, January 25, 2011

Archive for Tuesday, January 25, 2011

## Good news amidst bad year for schools

January 25, 2011

Email Post a comment Print

It's hard to find the shards of good news in the debris of education news these days. But amidst all the clamor and calamity, we took heart at one tidbit in a recent high school progress report to the Payson Unified School Board.

Far fewer freshmen and juniors flunked a class last year. The failure rate among sophomores and seniors also declined, but less significantly.

Moreover, the wealth of data released showed a heartening embrace of evidence — an example we hope the school board will take to heart in its budget deliberations.

High school principal Kathe Ketchem and vice principal Anna Van Zile were rightly cautious in interpreting the statistics showing that last year students flunked 144 fewer classes. But the figures seem to support the wisdom of the new scheduling that gives students six instead of seven classes, with more time in each class.

Of course, that shift also makes it harder to interpret the numbers. After all, if students take 14 percent fewer classes that could account for a drop in the number of failed classes. That may largely explain the 14 percent decline among seniors and the 8 percent decline among sophomores.

However, the striking 38 percent decline among freshmen and 46 percent drop among juniors represents real improvement. Of course, 20 to 25 percent of high school students still fail at least one class — a dispiriting number, even if it is declining.

However, we take heart in the trend — and the willingness to make a detailed report to the community.

In a world that made any sense, reforms would follow in the wake of such a report as we build on that success. Administrators credit things like the Gear Up program, a grant-supported effort to identify struggling students in time to help them.

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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Will a solar paneled Event Center roof ever really be built

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

or see results

But the world doesn't make much sense lately.

The school board will likely spend this year hacking away at various programs, trying to get rid of an \$830,000 deficit.

Still, we have this one, undeniable piece of good news. So let's sit here a moment in the ruins, admiring its heft in our hands.

Make a difference

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— Louis L'Amour

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Please note the small item in today's paper saying the Gila County Board of Supervisors is seeking applications to serve on a committee to draw the boundary lines of the three supervisorial districts to reflect the results of the 2010 census.

We don't yet have the latest numbers on the population shifts in the county that have taken place since the 2000 census, but Arizona's population has risen 24 percent. Most likely, the numbers will show that the northern part of Gila County now has the majority of the population, which should force a realignment of district lines that currently favor Globe, the county seat.

The board of supervisors is now seeking a pool of people to serve on a nine-person committee to draw up new district lines. The applicants must be registered voters who haven't been elected officials, lobbyists, on campaign committees or county employees — and who will promise not to run for office in the next three years.

We hope a strong core of Rim Country residents will file applications and that the board will not politicize the ultimate selection process.

Make no mistake, the committee has a vital job. An adroit line-drawing last time around gave southern Gila County effective control of the board of supervisors and the Gila Community College board. That helps explain why Payson has inadequate county facilities and a shriveled share of county attention and spending. We hope that a strong, incisive, fair-minded redistricting committee will produce fair district lines that still adhere to federal laws that seek to preserve the clout and integrity of minority communities — like the two Indian reservations within the county boundaries.

Anyone interested can get an application online at [www.gilacountyaz.gov](http://www.gilacountyaz.gov) or swing by the offices of District One Supervisor Tommie Martin, at 610 E. Highway 260 during business hours.

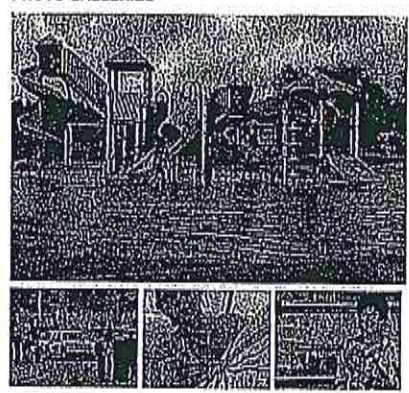
We know serving will require the sacrifice of time and effort.

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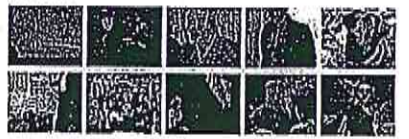
"Remember one thing about democracy. We can have anything we want and at the same time we always end up with exactly what we deserve."

— Edward Albee

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## County poised to rip off Rim Country

March 4, 2011

Email Post a comment Print

Speaking of the Panama Canal, Sen. Sam Hayakawa once commented: "It's ours. We stole it fair and square."

The Gila County Board of Supervisors seems to have the same attitude toward redistricting.

The incumbents have made a shameless attempt to stack the deck of the supposedly independent redistricting commission, charged with drawing the new lines for the county supervisorial districts. The list of redistricting committee members includes three residents of northern Gila County and six residents from southern Gila County.

Apparently, the two south-county oriented supervisors think they can get away with gerrymandering the county once again so they can swindle residents in the north county out of their constitutional right to equal representation.

Now, we haven't yet seen the population figures from the 2010 census for each town in the county. But we suspect we'll discover northern Gila County now has a decisive majority of the county's population — since Payson alone should have nearly 30 percent of the county population.

A decade ago, adroit gerrymandering compounded by federal restrictions on splitting the San Carlos Apache Reservation between two supervisorial districts gave the south county area two votes on the three-vote board. Even a decade ago, those district lines failed to reflect population patterns and warped county politics.

As a result, for the past decade, southern Gila County has reaped disproportionate benefits and north county voters have footed the bill.

The makeup of the redistricting committee suggests Supervisors Shirley Dawson and Mike Pastor think they can perpetuate this grave injustice for another decade — despite the continuing shift in population.

The case seems especially egregious when it comes to the appointments made by Shirley Dawson, whose shamelessly gerrymandered district includes Star Valley — the helpless tail on a shaggy dog. But instead of recommending the appointment of people from the north county portion of her district — she packed the jury with three residents of Globe.

Payson Mayor Kenny Evans has declared publicly that the town will file a lawsuit before it lets the supervisors disenfranchise north county residents once again.

We're glad.

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Alas, it's probably time to call the lawyers — based on the disregard of simple fairness reflected in the redistricting committee's membership.

No doubt — south county stole power last time around — maybe not fair and square, but certainly very skillfully.

This time, we'll suggest a different cliché: Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

#### Legislature losing its grip

Near as we can tell, they're having a nervous breakdown beneath the copper dome.

Alas, even our own normally conservative and sensible Sen. Sylvia Allen appears affected.

Witness the radical, half-baked overhaul of university funding that has escaped the Senate Appropriations Committee. It's a gooey, doughy, indigestible mess. Unaccountably, District 5 Sen. Allen, who is also president pro tem of the Senate, voted for this awful idea.

Now, the idea behind the bill almost makes sense. Let's interject some competition into higher education and make cost-effective, responsive colleges and universities compete for students.

So the bill eliminates the board of regents, sets up four independently governed universities and shifts to a voucher system — so state funding will follow the students rather than flow to the institutions based loosely on enrollment.

Such an approach would only make sense if you worked out the details. Instead, the Appropriations Committee seems to have thrown the SB 1115 up into the air, admired the flutter of papers and sent it onto the Senate floor. They just left blanks when it came to determining the size of the vouchers and didn't decide whether to offer the same voucher for a community college student as for a medical school student.

Absurd. Incomprehensible. Foolish.

If it advances, the proposal will spawn such profound chaos that it would most certainly doom the nearly completed deal between Payson and Arizona State University to build exactly the sort of low-cost college the state so desperately needs. SB 1115 would likely have the same effect as removing a runner's skeleton before a marathon hoping it will make him more flexible.

At the minimum, the appropriations committee should have launched a deep study of the ideas the bill contains and worked out the devilishly important details.

Instead, Sen. Allen said she voted for the bill to "further the debate." Amazing. We don't know what to make of such an addled attitude.

Unless they're just having a mental breakdown downtown.

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011

**South will prevail if north ignores lessons of past****GAZETTE BLOG EDITORIAL**

By Jim Keyworth  
Gazette Blog Editor

In a recent editorial headlined "County poised to rip off Rim Country," the *Payson Roundup* takes a position which seems to suggest that it and the high mucky mucks at town hall who it supports will be standing in opposition to Gila County's latest attempt to hijack our rights through the redistricting process. That's well and good.

What concerns us, as it so often has, is that neither the newspaper nor the public officials have the requisite sense of history to be successful.

Back a decade ago when the issue was last determined, former Payson Mayor Ray Schum waged a mighty battle to promote a fair redistricting plan of his own design. The *Roundup* editorial doesn't even mention his name, much less provide any insights into why he failed.

The *Roundup's* turnover in the past 10 years has been rather thorough -- a new publisher, three editors, a couple echelons of reporters. Nobody is left who covered the battle a decade ago.

I was there 10 years ago. I went to the public meetings. I covered Schum's efforts for the *Roundup*. My stories are in the *Roundup's* archives.

While the *Roundup* refuses to acknowledge my existence because I continue to give them a hard time over what I perceive as their journalistic deficiencies, Ray Schum is alive and well. Friends of his still live in the Rim Country and both information and access are readily available if the *Roundup* is willing to use some of its considerable resources to do the footwork.

Why does it matter? Because the county prevailed despite an intelligent and determined opposition waged by Schum. Because, despite Schum's entreaties and warnings, northern Gila County didn't provide him a lot of support. Because, as he told me afterward, the consultant hired by Gila County to draw up the gerrymandered plan intentionally skewed his winning recommendation in favor of those who were writing his check - the south.

But most important because it is blatantly wrong and illegitimate for the Gila County Board of Supervisors to be made up of two representatives from Globe and one from the Rim Country when the balance of power has so clearly shifted to the north. There is so much at stake for the south to maintain the status quo that they will fight dirty and they will fight tenaciously to maintain a stranglehold on Gila

County. They best not be underestimated.

The *Roundup* closes its naive editorial with the old "Fool me twice, shame on me" quote. We'd like to respectfully offer another old saw for their consideration: "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it."

Let's bring that Edmund Burke quote home to the Rim Country: If the *Payson Roundup* and others who oppose what the south will try to do to us yet again don't carefully consider what happened 10 years ago, they will most assuredly be fooled once more.

And, since we're in a cliché mode, you can take that to the bank.

Posted by Jim Keyworth at [8:11 AM](#) [1 comments](#)



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Archive for Friday, March 11, 2011

Archive for Friday, March 11, 2011

## County caught pulling new redistricting scam

March 11, 2011

Email Post a comment Print

Too little, maybe too late. That sums up the possibility that the Gila County Board of Supervisors may fix an outrageous effort to manipulate the redistricting process.

The three supervisors recently appointed constituents to the committee that will draw up new district boundary lines for the board of supervisors, Gila Community College and other special districts.

The districts of supervisors Shirley Dawson and Mike Pastor both contain many north county voters, but all six of the people they put on the nine-member committee come from south county. They ignored the parts of northern Gila County that elected them to represent their interests.

Apparently, they hope they can quietly manipulate district boundaries to ensure that south county continues to control the board of supervisors and the GCC governing board — despite the steady shift of the center of population to the north.

That's simply unacceptable — and ultimately unconstitutional.

Faced with predictable outrage, the Board of Supervisors is being asked to expand membership on the redistricting committee to 12.

Now, that's kind of like catching a horse thief with a herd of your horses and having him grin sheepishly and offer to give you back three of them — no charge.

Even if all three of the proposed new committee members live in north county, that still gives south county two thirds of the seats, but less than half the population.

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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How long will it take to actually get an ASU Campus in Payson?

- Three years
- Four years
- Five years
- Longer than five years
- Not at all

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their best to draw fair and representative district lines — no matter where they live.

And perhaps we're being paranoid, thinking that Dawson and Pastor are deliberately trying to stack the deck to make sure the district lines continue to favor the south — and the political power bases that elected them.

But we have been living with the current, skewed district lines for the past decade. We have seen the consequences played out repeatedly, with most county facilities and funding reserved for south county — like as not financed with the property taxes paid by folks in north county. Call us paranoid. Call us cynical. Or just call us observant. Call us whatever you want — just don't think we will stand here with our hands in our pockets watching it happen again.

Granted, they got away with fixing the game 10 years ago. But that don't mean the swindle will work again. This clumsy, bald-faced attempt to pack the redistricting committee looks like they figure they can just saddle up the horses they stole on the last visit and replenish their herd.

Don't bet on it. That sound you hear — that's the posse coming.

**Payson campus survives another legislative threat**

An ill-conceived bill that would have upended the system for financing the state's universities looks like it will die in the Senate Rules Committee.

SB 1115 would have deranged the current system for governing and funding the state's three public universities. Arizona State University's proposed Payson campus would have surely died in the crossfire, like an innocent bystander in a gang shootout.

Senate President Pro-Tem Sen. Sylvia Allen confirmed this week that SB 1115 will die quietly in the Senate Rules Committee, with the consent of its mercurial, hip-shooting author — Sen. Andy Biggs.

The quiet death of a bad bill will remove the latest threat to Payson's effort to strike a deal with ASU to build a high-tech campus for up to 6,000 students, which will charge half the tuition as the state's existing universities.

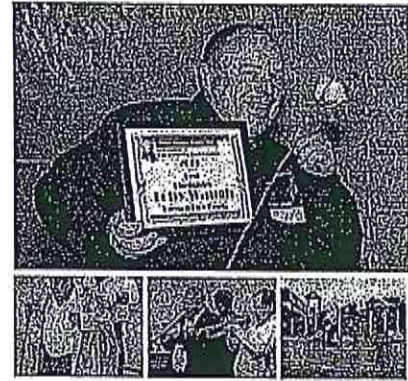
People who initially supported the bill hoped that getting rid of the Board of Regents and funding student vouchers might free the universities to compete for students and given students more control over the flow of state money.

However, the Appropriations Committee adopted the measure in the dead of the night as a strike-all bill, which means no one had a chance to think through the real impact of its radical restructuring. In the end, it would have spawned chaos rather than reform — and replaced the authority of the Board of Regents with a far more political and haphazard process in the Legislature.

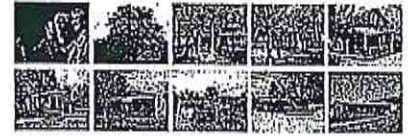
Sen. Allen said she voted for it in committee to show support for Biggs, but she later played a key role in the reconsideration of its provisions which led to its welcome burial in the Rules Committee.

Fortunately, ASU officials have said they hope to proceed with the Payson campus despite those cuts, depending on the outcome of a marketing study.

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...so the visionary plans for the Payson campus have survived one more plot twist in this nerve-wracking cliffhanger. Can't wait to read the next chapter.

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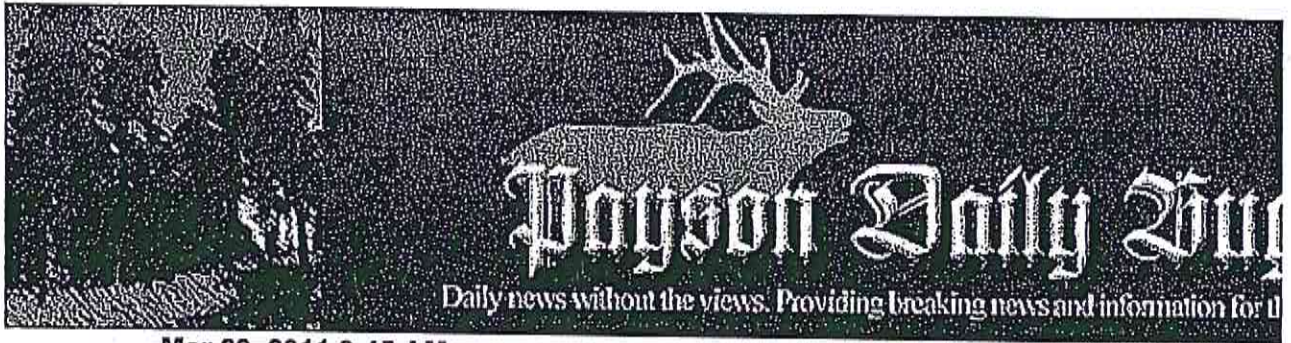
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Mar 29, 2011 9:45 AM

EDITOR



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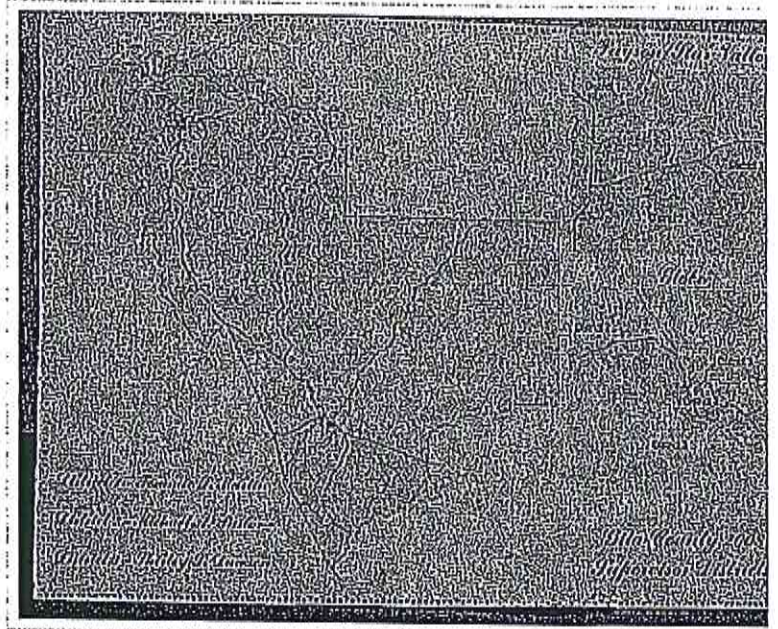
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TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2011

## Redistricting Gila County no easy task



By Carolyn Wall

those who cannot contribute, we fully understand. We welcome your comments, press

releases, meeting and event information, story ideas and literary contributions. Send news and information to [carriennette@yahoo.com](mailto:carriennette@yahoo.com).

Financial contributions can be sent to: Carolyn Wall, 918 E. Willow Circle, Payson, AZ 85541 or made by Paypal.



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Six committee members representing cities, towns and unincorporated communities north of Roosevelt Dam and others representing the southern half of Gila County are part of a new Redistricting Advisory Committee that will take on the task of carving up the county into voting districts based on the released 2010 census figures.


In order to qualify political candidates for 2012, the committee must get this done by the fall of 2011. This is the Department of Justice (DOJ) 60 days to approve a plan that will redraw the boundaries for the supervisors, the community college and vocational education districts. The committee will do this with the help of experienced consultants Tony Sissons of Research Advisory Services and Bruce Adelson of Federal Compliance Consulting.

Sissons and Adelson were on hand Tuesday, March 2 at District 1 Supervisor Tommie Martin's office to answer questions and share their expertise on the controversial matter of meeting the DOJ's criteria for redistricting that provide fair and equal representation – no easy task, the State of Arizona found 10 years ago when the DOJ in Washington objected to the state's redistricting plan.

"The numbers were less than they represented, 48 percent Hispanic voters, not 55 percent," Adelson said. "The higher number of people under 18 years old."

That is why Arizona is now one of 16 states that has to get approval for its redistricting plans from the DOJ.

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**STATEWIDE NEWS**

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“As long as we have Russell Pearce doing Russell Pearce things, we’re under a spotlight,” Martin said.

The way the county is split into districts now gives more weight to the southern half, according to Martin.

The Gila Community College Board, with five members two who represent the northern part of the county, and three County Supervisors, Martin is the only one whose constituency is comprised solely of the residents of the northern half of the county.

The DOJ looks at one person, one vote, and protects Native American and Hispanic vote when it looks to a redistricting plan. Section V of the Redistricting Plan that discrimination is whether people who are non-White have electoral opportunity.

“Ten years ago the state made a serious big mistake,” said, “And we’re paying for it.”

**Census Populations in Gila County Cities, Towns, Pla**

Payson: 2010-15,301 (an increase of 12.34 %)  
2000-13,620

Star Valley: 2010- 2,310  
2000-n/a

Pine 2010-1,963 (an increase of 1.66%)  
2000-1,931

Strawberry: 2010-961 (a decrease of 6.52%)  
2000-1,028

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#### DAILY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Young: 2010-666 (an increase of 18.72%)  
2000-561

Globe: 2010-7,532 (an increase of 61%)  
2000-7,486

Hayden: 2010- 662 (a decrease of 25.78%)  
2000-892

Miami: 2010-1,837 (a decrease of 5.11%)  
2000-1,936

Winkleman: 2010-353 (a decrease of 20.32%)  
2000-443

San Carlos: 2010-4,038 (an increase of 8.67%)  
2000-3,716

In Gila County, the Hispanic population in District 1 is 1,467, an increase of 86.88 percent. District 2's Hispanic population for 2010 is 4,916, an increase of .36 percent. District 3 is 18,341, an increase of 6.96 percent.

The American Indian population for 2010 in District 1 is up from 128, and an increase of 178.91 percent. District 2 has a population of 715, an increase of 72.29 percent, and District 3 has the largest American Indian population at 6,900, a 17.62 percent increase over the last census.

For information on the State of Arizona census, go to <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data>.

Posted by Carolyn Wall at 5:22 PM 0 comments

Labels: Government, Regional

## North-South county divide a wrench in redistricting works

By Teresa McQuerrey

March 25, 2011

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Northern Gila County may have been given three more seats on the redistricting boat, but that's no guarantee for smooth sailing. Its first day at sea left the committee's election of a chairman in knots.

The redistricting committee had its first meeting March 22 and it had only two action items. The first was to select a chair. The other was to determine the date of its next meeting.

The committee's guidelines, created by the county's election office and approved by the supervisors, require approval of any action by nine votes, not a simply majority of 7.

The committee took five different votes. The first two were to elect a chairman. Thomas Moody of Globe was nominated and so was Mike Vogel of Payson. In the first vote, each nominee was given six votes. The outcome was the same in the second vote. In both cases, the polling was evenly split between the north and south representatives.

Moody said he didn't want to see the committee become a north vs. south fight, so offered to withdraw his name.

The third vote was to name co-chairs. That failed 3-9.

At that point Moody withdrew his name and Bob Pastor, another Globe resident and nominator of Moody in the first place, nominated Roberto Sanchez of Star Valley for the post. Sanchez declined.

The fourth vote was to elect Vogel chair. That failed as well, with Vogel getting only eight votes, so it failed 8-4.

Finally, with a unanimous vote, the committee agreed to put off electing a chairman until its next meeting, giving members a chance to become better acquainted with one another.

The group will meet in about a month to begin reviewing the census data the county has just received.

In the meantime, the members may send county elections director Linda Eastlick brief autobiographies to be included in the group's next information packet.

In other business, deputy county attorney Bryan Chambers gave the redistricting committee a crash course in open meeting law. This was followed by presentations by the county's redistricting consultants Bruce Adelson and Tony Sissons.

Adelson is a former U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division senior attorney and was team leader for review of all Arizona redistricting submissions in 2000. His work with the committee and county will include: examination of DOJ files on Gila County, advice on strategy to avoid diluting special voting populations of Native Americans and Hispanics, provide an "insider" view of new DOJ regulations and procedures and advise on the content of the county's application for DOJ preclearance.

Because of past bad practices, Arizona is one of several states that must have its redistricting plans "precleared" by the federal government before elections can be held.

Sissons has managed 17 successful city and county redistricting processes (one city, 16 counties) — all were precleared by the DOJ on first submission and none were ever challenged in court. He will provide technical and procedural assistance to Gila County staff and the redistricting committee.

Sissons will analyze the census data for the redistricting process and will eventually draw the formal boundary maps for the supervisor, community college and joint technical education districts.

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Originally published at: <http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/2011/mar/25/north-south-county-divide-wrench-redistricting-wor/>



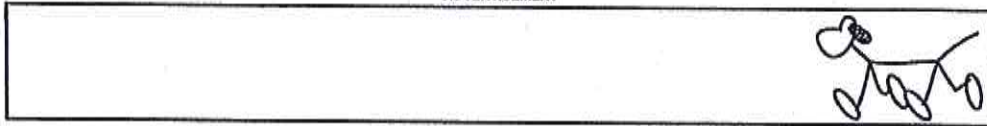


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Archive for Friday, March 25, 2011

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## Enough is enough of county gerrymandering

March 25, 2011

Editor:

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I have been a full-time resident of Payson for almost 20 years. I observed firsthand the obvious disparity in allocated resources, supplies, and county infrastructure improvements. Dog bone projects are thrown to northern Gila County taxpayers to facilitate the status quo and keep us silent.

The gerrymandering of our election districts designed by the political elite of Globe, has maintained this stranglehold for too long.

The new federal census has been released. The clear majority of the population resides in northern Gila County and has for some time.

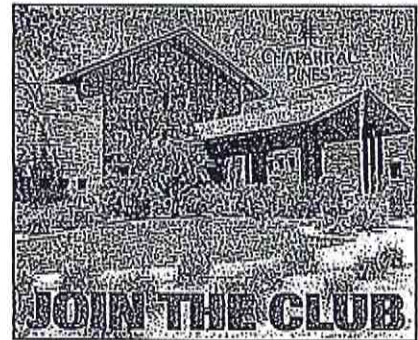
Solution, two county supervisor seats for northern Gila County, one for the south south. Or, as some are discussing now, a serious effort to split the county if no timely political correction is made. Enough is enough.

Don Evans

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QUESTION OF THE WEEK

If passed how will the Senate Budget plan affect Payson?

- Payson won't be affected
- Payson will become a ghost town
- Payson residents' quality of life will suffer greatly
- Payson will transform into a small village community

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# County redistricting is politically charged process

By Pete Aleshire

April 8, 2011

Race will likely trump population when it comes to the politically explosive task of drawing new Gila County district lines.

For the past decade, supervisorial district lines that favor the south county over the north have spurred protests and fierce political struggle.

The Justice Department's attempt to protect the political clout of minority communities will likely play the decisive role in the task of drawing up new district lines in the shadow of the 2010 census.

On one hand, officials in northern Gila County hope new district lines will shift the balance of power to the north, which now has more than 55 percent of the population. While Payson's population has risen more than 12 percent since 2000, the population of Globe, Miami, Superior and Winkelman have shrunk or stagnated.

On paper that looks like a no-brainer. Surely meeting the constitutional requirement of "one man, one vote" will ensure that new district lines will neatly reverse the division that currently gives south county residents control of both the board of supervisors and the Gila Community College board.

Simple. Right? Not so fast.

Gotta check this out with the Justice Department, which rejected Arizona's redistricting plans in both 2000 and 1990. In both cases, the Justice Department said Arizona had lied about its numbers to slip through boundaries that would minimize the influence of Hispanic voters in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties, according to a recent briefing for the Rim Country community by consultants hired by the county to advise the recently established redistricting committee.

So Arizona is one of 16 states that will have to get federal approval of its new district lines. And the Justice Department lawyers will remain focused mostly on how the new district lines will affect Native American or Hispanic voters.

That underlying truth largely accounts for the complexity of the political struggle that already swirls around the county's redistricting committee — which now has six north county and six south county members.

"We have a right to have our voices heard," said Payson Mayor Kenny Evans, who has vowed the town will file a lawsuit if the district lines don't reflect the population shift in the past decade.

"We'll do whatever we have to do. We have not had that equal voice in our government in the past decade. We want to see a Gila County that is united: It has always felt like the north versus the south. It's time to put down these swords and sabers."

A review of the raw data hosted by Gila County Supervisor Tommie Martin underscored the complexity of the task, that must satisfy both the constitutional requirement of equal representation and the 1965 Voting Rights Act's concern with gerrymandering that affects minority voters.

Recently released census figures show northern Gila County has grown faster than southern Gila County, where most of the area's minority residents live.

In the past decade, north county communities grew while key south county communities shrank.

For instance, Payson's population (15,301) grew 12 percent, Tonto Basin (1,424) grew 69 percent and Young (666) grew 18 percent. Pine stayed essentially unchanged and Strawberry shrank by 6 percent.

By contrast, Globe's tally (7,486) barely changed and Miami (1,827), Hayden (662) and Winkelman (353) all declined between 6 and 25 percent.

The fastest-growing area in southern Gila County turned out to be the San Carlos Apache Reservation, including the communities of Peridot and San Carlos, which grew by 7 percent and 9 percent.

Currently, two of the three county supervisor seats mostly represent south-county voters, with one district dominated by the north. Supervisor Tommie Martin's district includes all of Payson, Pine, Strawberry and nearby communities.

Supervisor Shirley Dawson represents the San Carlos Apache Reservation, a chunk of the Globe area with many Hispanic residents and a piece of northern Gila County, including Star Valley.

Supervisor Mike Pastor represents the rest of the Globe area, the heavily Hispanic areas of Hayden and Winkelman and a wide swath of lightly populated land that includes much of the Tonto Basin.

At first glance, drawing boundaries that divided the 54,000 county residents among three supervisorial shouldn't be too difficult — just put about 17,000 voters in each district.

But throw in the potential impact on minority communities and the task gets complicated.

Congress passed the Voting Rights Act as the cornerstone of a sweeping set of civil rights laws designed mostly to overturn systems in the south that prevented most black citizens from even registering to vote. The law held that lawmakers could not draw district lines in a way designed to prevent minority voters from electing someone who represented their views — especially a candidate of their own race.

The act has generally increased the political clout of minority voters, including Hispanic and Native American voters in Arizona.

The county consultants, Bruce Adelson and Tony Sissons, worked on redistricting back in 2000, when the Justice Department rejected Arizona's district lines in 2000.

Normally, the Justice Department has favored lines that will create a district with a 50 percent to 55 percent minority population. Such a district can often elect a minority candidate.

The just-released census figures show that the population in Martin's north-county dominated District 1 is 8 percent Hispanic and 2 percent American Indian.

Pastor's, south-county dominated District 2 is 29 percent Hispanic and 4 percent Native American.

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Dawson's south-county dominated District 3 is 18 percent Hispanic and 15 percent Native American, since it includes all of the San Carlos Apache Reservation.

The county redistricting consultants said any plan that dilutes these percentages of minority voters would likely wave red flags under the noses of the ultimate Justice Department reviewers.

The impact on minority voters will likely take precedence over ensuring districts each have the same population. Judges have accepted districts with population variances as great as 10 percent. In theory, each supervisor district should have 17,866 residents, which means Pastor's district has 4 percent too few, Dawson's district has almost 3 percent too many and Martin's district has 1 percent too many.

So on the face of it, line drawers could balance out population by small shifts in the line that would move some voters from Dawson's district to Pastor's, without upsetting the Justice Department or disturbing the dominance of southern Gila County.

However, other possibilities may emerge as the redistricting committee fiddles with computerized maps that allow them to instantly calculate populations and minority percentages whenever they move a district line.

For instance, the existing district lines split up the Hispanic population in the Globe and Winkelman area between Pastor's and Dawson's districts. As a result, District 3 is 25 percent Hispanic and District 2 is 17 percent Hispanic.

In addition, Dawson's district includes the entire San Carlos Apache Reservation, which means that Native Americans comprise one-third of the population.

But suppose you concentrated the Hispanic voters in one district, giving those minority voters close to the 55 percent target the Justice Department often seeks.

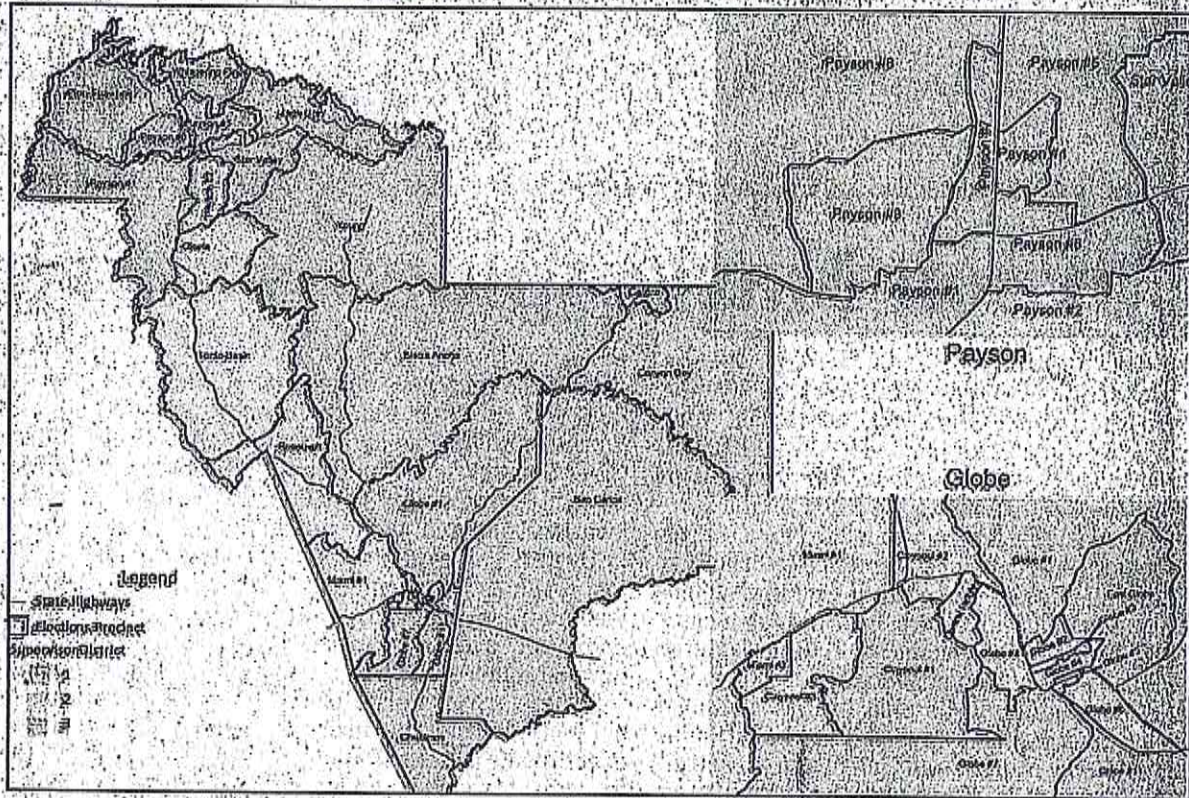
That could create a new swing district that would include both the San Carlos and the Tonto Apache Reservation, with a population base that would lean north.

That sort of calculation will likely dominate the deliberations of the redistricting committee in the weeks and months to come.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2011



The Justice Department's attempt to protect the political clout of minority communities will likely play the decisive role in the political task of drawing up new district lines in the shadow of the 2010 census.