



THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

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All bought and paid for

Town Hall 'mortgage' is burned

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Once he found a match, Mayor Jay Schlum burned a "symbolic" mortgage document for the Fountain Hills Town Hall building on March 8.

The mayor was joined by staff and Chamber of Commerce representatives in celebrating the event.

The event celebrated the town's early payoff of the bonds used to finance the Town Hall building.

Comments from Chamber President/CEO Frank Ferrara and Board Chairman Shawn White congratulated the town for the fiscal planning that allowed the payoff during tough economic times.

Deputy Town Manager/Finance Director Julie Ghatti said the \$3.6 million bond issue was issued in 2004 and was being paid back through a dedicated portion of the town's local sales tax (1/10 percent).

Sales tax collections between 2004 and 2008 resulted in a surplus in tax collections dedicated to the debt service.

During budget discussions for the 2012 fiscal



(cont. on page 7A) Mayor Jay Schlum lights up the symbolic mortgage document.



Town Manager Ken Buchanan is adjusting to his new office in Fountain Hills.

New manager settling into FH business

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

A week on the job and Ken Buchanan says he is still getting to know what he doesn't already know about Fountain Hills.

Although he is discovering that many of the issues he is facing here are not so much different than what he has had to deal with in his nearly 40-year career in government.

In the time since he was hired by the Town Council Buchanan said he has had occasion to attend and participate in several special events.

"The sense of community is extremely strong here," Buchanan said of Fountain Hills. "That is something I have not seen in my previous five jobs."

Speaking of the special Centennial event and dedication, Buchanan said he was impressed to see the

performance of the Community Choir and Community Band.

"To have these in a community of this size is awesome," Buchanan said. "This is a very involved community."

Buchanan has a mountain of material he is sifting through to learn about the town culture, its processes and how the council interacts.

"I'm learning about projects and programs and what the first steps we need to take with the job," Buchanan said.

Early on Buchanan said one of the first items to be considered is to conduct a "post mortem" on the street bond election to understand why it failed and what may work in the future.

Buchanan said asphalt has a shelf life and in Fountain Hills much of it is

(cont. on page 7A)

*Text-A-Tip busts teen party

MCSO issues 24 citations

By Michael Scharnow
Times Editor

The Text-A-Tip law enforcement tool launched last fall has led to the recent bust of a teenage drinking party, resulting in 24 citations just from that one incident.

Text-A-Tip allows information to be communicated in a timely, concise manner through texting and is 100 percent anonymous.

"It already has been a benefit to the community," Sheriff's Office Lt. Dave Munley told the Fountain Hills Drug Coalition last week.

"We're happy to be a partner with you on this."

The coalition funded the program this school year. Since launching last Sep-

tember, MCSO has received 87 tips through anonymous texts.

The bulk of them have come from middle school and high school students, but 34 of them came from the community at-large.

Different codes have been assigned for the two campuses as well as the community in general.

Another tip led to a middle school student being pulled out of class and cited for possession and consumption of vodka on campus.

He was hiding the alcohol in a water bottle, Munley said.

"Some of the tips were about things that had already occurred," Munley said. "We can't do enforcement on those, but we did speak with parents of kids who were involved, and they

were appreciative of our calls.

"All of the tips get followed up on."

Some people may be hesitant to pick up the phone and contact MCSO with information, but with the ubiquitous smart phones and ease of texting, more and more residents are jumping on board, according to coalition leaders.

As for the teen party bust last month, Munley said some adolescents were not drinking and turned over to their parents.

A total of 17 minors were given citations for underage consumption at that party and additional charges were filed against a teen for using a fake ID to purchase the alcohol.

Marijuana also was found at the residential party.

Thirty-nine teens were at the party.

"The tips we're getting are in line with what we've been requesting of students and the community," Munley said.

"We're pleased with it. We hope to show more success."

Carole Groux, coalition director, commented at the meeting, "This is about prevention. We want to deter future behavior of this type."

"Our main focus is protecting and preventing youth from dangerous behavior."

The coalition recently unveiled a new marketing strategy for Text-A-Tip, working with local merchants to display signs and business cards promoting the anonymous texting program.

For one month, merchants place a Text-A-Tip flier in a highly visible location (on a door, window, main counter, etc.) and Text-A-Tip "business cards" by their registers.

Sheriff's Office

Public forum on burglaries

Fountain Hills has experienced more than a dozen residential burglaries since Jan. 1, and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office wants to talk to residents about it.

Sheriff's Capt. Joe Rodriguez is inviting residents to a presentation on Thursday, March 22, at the Community Center.

Rodriguez will be talking about some of the incidents, but with most still under investigation some details may

not be available to the public.

"We are being proactive about this," Rodriguez said. "We are using what we learned with the capture of the rock burglar."

However, Rodriguez said at this time there does not seem to be a pattern that would substantially connect the recent burglaries to a single individual.

The meeting on March 22 is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Community Center.

All become Irish on Saturday

All things Irish will be celebrated in Fountain Park Saturday, March 17.

The tradition of turning the fountain emerald green will be a highlight at noon. Festivities start at 10 a.m. and end at 6 p.m.

The event includes music, corned beef and cabbage and a beer garden coordinated by AMVETS and the VFW, who sponsor the day's activities.

In addition to the park events, Art on the Avenue and a weekend version of the Farmers Market will

combine on the east median of the Avenue of the Fountains from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Food items on the Av-



enue will include seasonal favorites like Irish soda bread, a variety of green

cut flowers and festive versions of fudge, cookies, green whoopee pies, scones, biscotti, and other snacks and treats.

Other vendors will offer fresh tamales, salsas, jams, jellies, coffee, Italian sodas and a variety of other market items like pickles, organic honey and fresh-pressed avocado oil.

Kids of all ages can enjoy the face-painting booth. Hand-painted casual wear and handmade jewelry and southwestern items for home and patio will be sold.

INSIDE THIS WEEK

Greening:

Downtown project moving into next phase.

See Page 2A

Softball:

Katie Petkus (pictured) and her Lady Falcons had a rough week.

See Page 2B

GOP:

Annual breakfast this Saturday at Community Center.

See Page 8B



WEATHER

	H	L	P
Tues., March 6	82	47	--
Wed., March 7	64	49	--
Thurs., March 8	70	43	--
Fri., March 9	71	47	--
Sat., March 10	70	47	--
Sun., March 11	76	46	--
Mon., March 12	81	48	--

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