

Cochise County Legacy Project Community Development History



**Highway
&
Floodplain
Department**

**Planning
&
Zoning
Department**

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT HISTORY



Even though the Cochise County Community Development Department is in its relative infancy (3 years), the two agencies (Highway and Floodplain and Planning and Zoning) that comprise the department have history dating back to the early to mid 1970's. In order to show this, the history segment of this department has been composed into three parts:

- ▲ Highway and Floodplain
- ▲ Planning and Zoning
- ▲ Community Development

HIGHWAY AND FLOODPLAIN

The Highway and Floodplain Department began as the Cochise County Highway Dept. in 1978 by Resolution 78-44 and later became the Public Works Department in 1982 by Resolution 82-16. In 1993 it was changed to the Highway and Floodplain Dept. by Resolution 93-02.

The foundation of the department however started in close proximity to when we became a county. Below is a little history and facts that helped form the earliest days of the Highway and Floodplain Department.

Where we began...

From the beginning of our County in 1881 up until 1909, public road construction and maintenance was funded by property taxes and labor primarily performed by the citizens of Cochise County.

- ▲ The Board of Supervisors separated the county into Road Districts and appointed a Road Overseer for each district who was responsible for maintenance. The Board of Supervisors also had the power to levy a property tax to be distributed for public roads in proportion to the township from which the tax was collected. [1]
- ▲ Every able bodied male over 21 and under 50 was required to perform labor under the direction of the Road Overseer or pay the equivalent. During this time period the amount required changed frequently and ranged from 1 day to 2 days labor or \$2 to \$6 annually. [2]

With the advent of the automobile, construction and maintenance changed.

- ▲ In 1909 the office of the County Superintendent of Roads and the office of the Territorial Engineer were created.

The Superintendent of Roads replaced the function of the separate Road Overseers. [3]

Individual road districts and the requirement that residents perform road labor were abolished. [3]

The Territorial Engineer provided aid to the County Superintendent of Roads and, under direction of the Board of Control, managed territorial routes. [3][4]

- ▲ By 1913 the office of the County Engineer was established. The County Engineer became the custodian of county property and records relating to surveying, engineering and road construction. [5]
- ▲ Up until the late 1970's, road maintenance was performed by field crews under direct supervision of the Board of Supervisors as well as with guidance from

the County Engineer. Major improvement projects were primarily completed in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Transportation under the Federal-aid secondary highway system. [6]

- ▲ In 1978 the Board of Supervisors created the County Highway Department and delegated authority to administer and direct the work of the Highway Department. [7]

Due to the automobile, road funding changed as well.

- ▲ In 1921 Arizona authorized the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax, proceeds of which are deposited into a road fund and apportioned to the county. For Cochise County, the road fund has replaced property tax revenue for road construction and maintenance. Below are a selection of changes in this funding:

In 1921 75% of the State Road Tax Fund was apportioned to counties. The tax began as \$0.01 per gallon [8].

In 1927 the State Highway Department was created and 37.5% went to counties and 62.5% went to State under the newly created State Highway Department (predecessor to the Arizona Department of Transportation) [8].

- ▲ In 1943 1/3rd of the amount set aside for counties was redistributed to cities and towns [8].

Today the tax is \$0.18 per gallon. After allocations to the Economic Strength Project Fund and to the Highway Patrol, Department of Public Safety, 19% of the remaining funds within the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) are distributed to the counties based on number of miles maintained, unincorporated population and fuel usage back in 1985 [9][10].

- ▲ In 1941 Arizona authorized the Vehicle License Tax (previously referred to as the Auto Lieu Tax). VLT supplements funding used for road construction and maintenance. [11]

Did you know?

In 1864, the territory determined that the minimum right-of-way width for a designated highway is 4 rods (66 feet). [12]

One of Cochise County's earliest photographed roads is a picture of Apache Pass taken during the 1867-1868 Kansas Pacific railroad survey [13]. Apache Pass was already established as a military route and for the Butterfield Overland Stage route [14]; however Arizona's first railroad took an alternate route north of the Dos Cabezas Mountains [15].



One of the first automobiles in Cochise County was used by George Mitchell of the Greene Consolidated Mining Company in 1900 to travel back and forth from Bisbee to the mines in Cananea, Mexico. [16]



By 1909 there were 10 automobile dealerships and/or mechanic shops in the Territory. 4 shops in Phoenix, 4 shops in Tucson, and the remaining 2 in Cochise County. Originally located in Courtland, Southern Arizona Auto Company is still in business today in Douglas. [17]

In the 1910's Cochise County was the wealthiest county in the Territory/State, contributing the greatest amount of road taxes. This allowed the Territorial/State Engineer to experiment with road surfacing methods. The first documented road within Arizona to receive such surfacing was the Bisbee-Douglas Highway, which in 1910 consisted of a 12 foot wide road with an earthen road bed, thin layer of gravel and asphaltic oil covered with sand. [4]

At least until the 1930's, it was believed that the Continental Divide was located on Old Divide Road (also known as Mule Pass) just northwest of Bisbee.

- ▲ What we now call Old Divide Road was once part of four of the first transcontinental roads. These routes were the Bankhead Highway (Washington D.C. to California) [15], Borderland Highway (Texas to California) [15], Dixie Overland Highway (Georgia to California) [18] and Old Spanish Trail Highway (Florida to California) [18]. The highest point in elevation along these routes was marked with an obelisk monument as the Continental Divide at the crest of Old Divide Road.

- ▲ In 1916 the General Land Office (predecessor to the United States Bureau of Land Management) surveyed this Section of land and noted the Continental Divide on Mule Pass [19].

- ▲ In 1931 the United States Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads (predecessor to the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration) continued to announce that "...between Bisbee and Tombstone, the road crosses the continental divide at an altitude of 6,030 feet..." [20].

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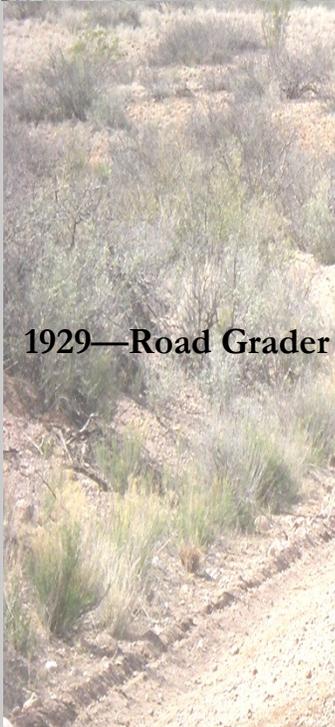


Footnotes:

1. 1871 Session Laws of the Territory of Arizona; <https://ualawlib.omeka.net>
2. 1866, 1871, 1887, 1889, 1891, 1895, 1897, 1901 and 1903 Session Laws of the Territory of Arizona ; <https://ualawlib.omeka.net>
3. 1909 Session Laws of the Territory of Arizona ; <https://ualawlib.omeka.net>
4. 1909-1914 Report of the State Engineer; <http://azmemory.azlibrary.gov>
5. Arizona Revised Statute 11-561 and 11-562; <http://www.azleg.state.az.us>
6. Cochise County Highway and Floodplain Central Files
7. Cochise County Resolution 78-44
8. Historical Tax Law Changes, Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax; <http://www.azleg.gov>
9. Arizona Revised Statute 28-5606 and 28-6538; <http://www.azleg.state.az.us>
10. Arizona Administrative Rule #R17-1-347; <http://www.azsos.gov>
11. Arizona Revised Statute 28-5801 through 28-5808; <http://www.azleg.state.az.us>
12. 1864 Howell Code; <https://ualawlib.omeka.net>
13. Arizona Historical Society source identifier: Pictures-Places-Apache Pass/ #28841; <http://azmemory.azlibrary.gov>
14. Fort Bowie National Historic Site; <http://www.nps.gov>
15. Arizona Transportation History Report 660; <http://azdot.gov>
16. 8-24-1900 & 11-19-1900 Cochise Review Newspaper; <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>
17. 1909-1910 Arizona and El Paso Business Directory; <http://azmemory.azlibrary.gov>
18. General Highway History U.S. Route 80 The Dixie Overland Highway; <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>
19. General Land Office Survey Plat for Township 23 South, Range 24 East, Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona #2555; <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov>
20. 1931 Bureau of Public Roads News Release about U.S. 80; <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>



1923—Arizona's first State Governor George W. P. Hunt and Traveling Party



1929—Road Grader



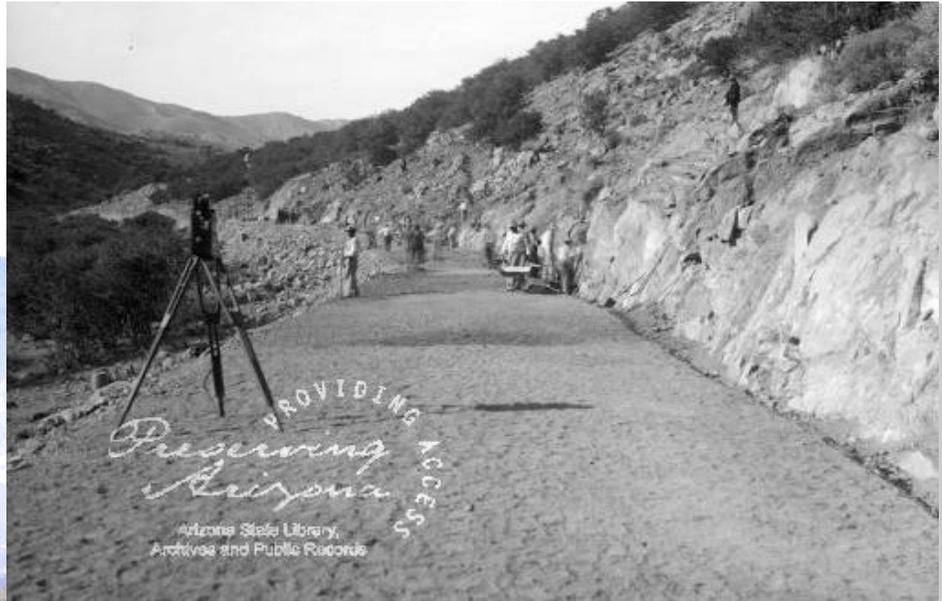
Arizona State Archives



Arizona State Archives

1938—Road Grader

Pre 1909—A road being surveyed and constructed in Cochise County



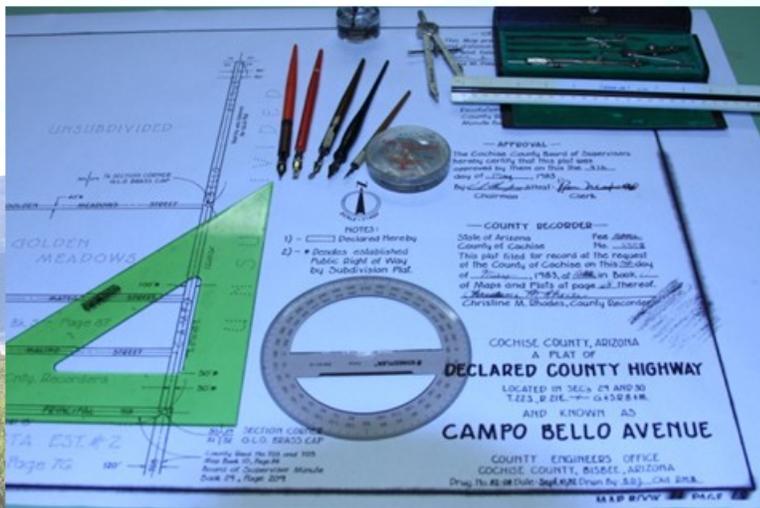
1930's—
Mules being used to grade roads

1934—Old Divide Road and Juniper Flats Road



Then & Now...

Drafting & Design Equipment



Drafting using “crow quill pens” and drawn on linen substrates (1970’s)



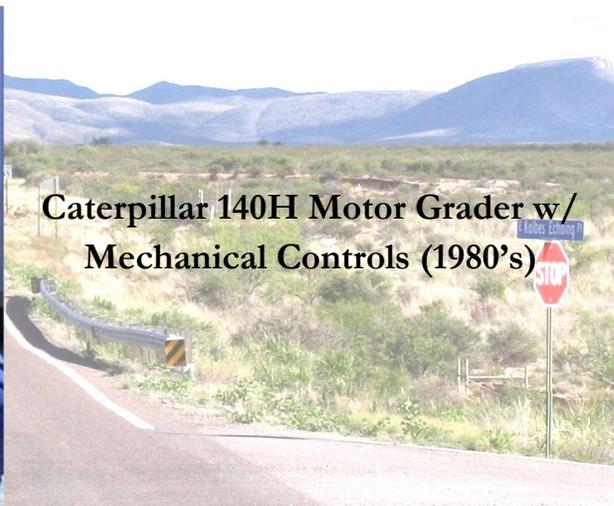
Computer Aided Drafting and Design CADD (2010’s)

Road Construction Equipment

Mule team and converted vehicle drawn road grader
(early 1900's)



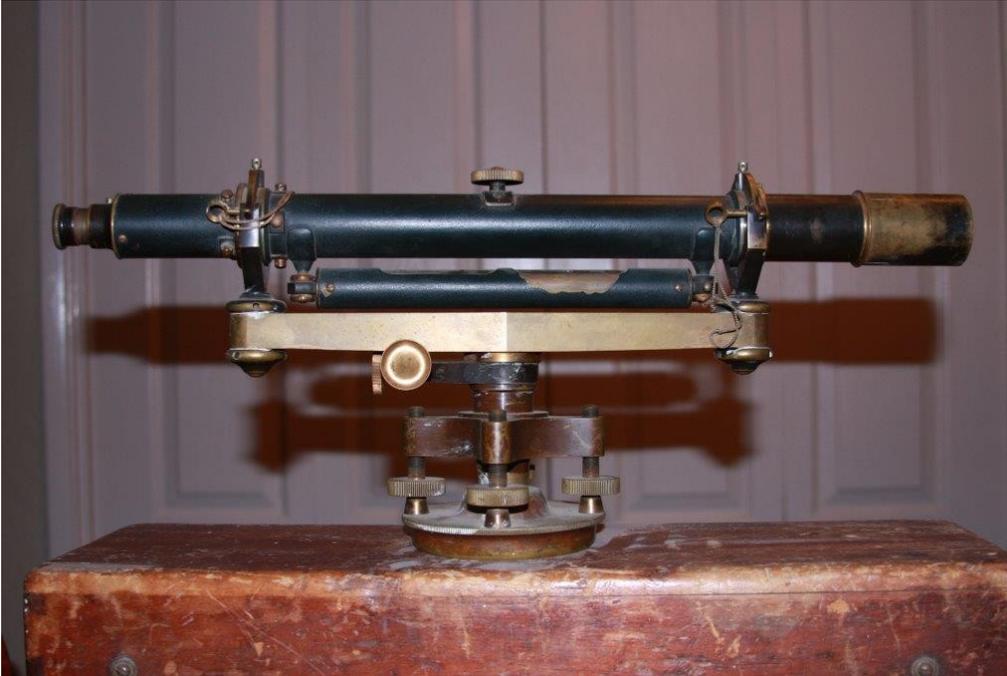
Caterpillar 140H Motor Grader w/
Mechanical Controls (1980's)



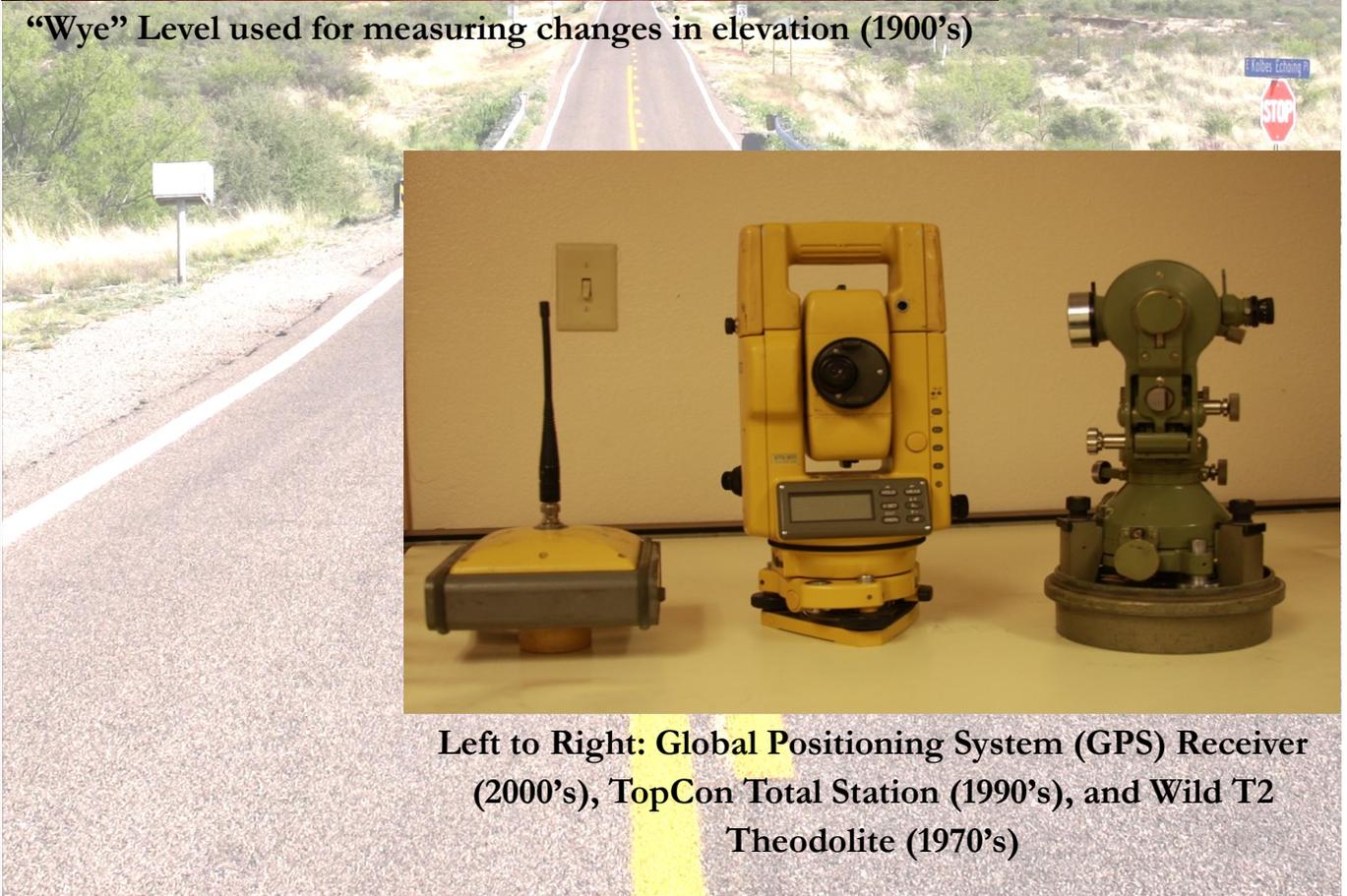
Caterpillar 140M Motor Grader w/
Electronic
Joystick" Controls (2010's)



Surveying Equipment



“Wye” Level used for measuring changes in elevation (1900’s)



Left to Right: Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver (2000’s), TopCon Total Station (1990’s), and Wild T2 Theodolite (1970’s)

Sign Fabrication Equipment



Die and Die Cutter for cutting individual letters for signs
(1970's)



Computerized Plotter/Cutter with Sign Design
Software (2000's)

We've come a long way

Department staff has been very progressive and innovative during its 37 year (1978-2015) history. The following recounts several firsts for county departments:

- ▲ The department was the first to obtain personal computers programmed with Windows 95 software. Office computers were connected to each other and the internet allowing documents and emails to be shared within the department and with outside agencies and companies. The department was the first to develop a website loaded with information about rural roads such as thresholds for upgrading dirt roads to chip sealed roads, cost to maintain dirt roads and chip sealed roads, costs to upgrade dirt roads to chip sealed roads and unique standards for low volume rural roads. This information generated emails and calls from all across the country from other county officials.
- ▲ In the late 1980's the department installed a computerized fleet management system. Maintenance and operation costs were tracked for each department vehicle and piece of heavy equipment. The department invited other departments to send their vehicles in for maintenance and repairs. Until that time county vehicles were maintained by each department utilizing local, private shops. The service became very popular mainly because the vehicles were well maintained, spotlessly cleaned, and minor repairs were made. With this beginning, a fleet manager was, in time, hired by the county and soon a separate fleet management department was developed. The H&F Department and the Sheriff's department continued to do their own fleet management for several years until Fleet management took over all fleets.
- ▲ In the early 1990's the department had staff officed at several locations throughout Bisbee. The department included Facilities at the time. Department management began a search for property to house the department's office staff. Sites were investigated at many locations in Bisbee. Ultimately the department recommended purchasing the two parcels that make up the County campus on Melody Lane and the H&F Department roadyard. The department oversaw the construction of the first buildings at the site. The buildings in the roadyard were primarily constructed with in house staff, from the concrete foundations and floors to building out the

several offices and shops. Two buildings were constructed by contract on the Melody Lane campus. The H&F department moved office staff into the new office building along with office staff of the P&Z department. The second building was a shop for the Facilities staff. Soon thereafter Facilities became a separate department.

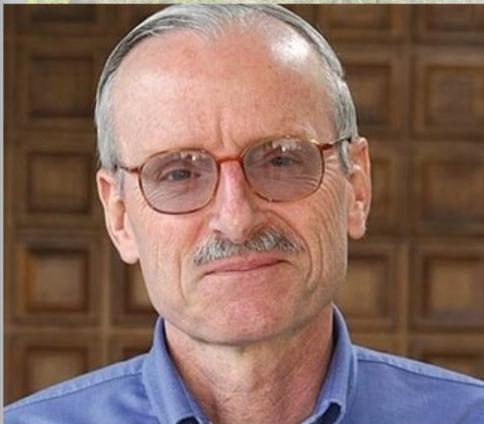
- ▲ In the early 1990's department staff also developed a set of standards for low volume rural roads and published them on the website. This resulted in great interest by many county engineers throughout the nation. An ad-hoc committee of county engineers was formed under the American Society of Civil Engineers with the stated purpose of developing national standards for low volume rural roads. The committee was initially censored by the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). They raised concerns that the committee did not have the authority to develop national road standards. The committee decided to continue their efforts and invited representatives of both NACE and AASHTO to attend their next meeting which was changed from Atlanta, Georgia to Washington DC. AASHTO sent a representative to the meeting to "keep notes and report back". In the meantime the Arizona Association of County Engineers (AACE) agreed to back the efforts of the department by paying the expenses of Bill Cox, the Assistant County Engineer, to travel back east to attend the meetings. Mr. Cox prepared a presentation on the need for new standards for low volume rural roads for the committee's next meeting. The AASHTO representative was convinced by Mr. Cox's presentation for the need. AASHTO then took over the effort using the ad-hoc committee, chaired by Mr. Cox, as a steering committee. The effort took several years and resulted in AASHTO publishing a national set of standards entitled "Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads", (AASHTO, 2001). These guidelines have had an immense impact on lowering the costs of building and maintaining low volume roads nationally. Of the 1,462 miles of county maintained roads 1,147 miles (78%) are Very Low Volume Roads. These roads meet the new standards significantly lowering the county's operation and maintenance costs and liability.

Past Directors

Fred M. Hewitt

1978—1984

The first official Director of the newly formed Public Works Department by Resolution 78-44 in 1978. After leaving in 1984 he enjoyed his career as an engineer in the private sector where he was the President of Hewitt and Associates. In 1995 he returned to the department as a staff engineer for a 3 year period prior to retirement.



Craig McConnell

1984-1985

Mr. McConnell started with Cochise County Public Works as a staff engineer under Fred Hewitt in 1982. He was appointed to the Director's position shortly after Mr. Hewitt's departure. In 1985, Mr. McConnell went to Pima County as their County Engineer. After leaving Pima County he traversed the United States in several different engineering capacities before settling in Prescott as their Public Works Director. Mr. McConnell currently serves as the City Manager for the City of Prescott, Arizona.

Steve Williams

1985-1986

Originally came to Cochise County as a staff engineer and became the Director when Mr. McConnell left for an engineering position for Pima County. Shortly (approx. 9 month), Mr. Williams left to join Mr. McConnell at Pima County. He retired from public service as the City Manager for the City of Palmdale, California.

David Mauthe

1986-1988

Became the Director in 1986 and after a short stay moved to Los Alamos, New Mexico where he became their Public Works Director and later became the City Manager.



Allon Owen

1988—2005

Mr. Owen came to Cochise County in 1986 as the Floodplain Administrator. Mr. Owen was charged with the task of implementing and establishing FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) floodplain mapping to allow some permit building within designated floodplains. In 1988, he was asked to head the Public Works department. In 1993, by resolution 93-02, the department changed its name to the Highway and Floodplain Department. Mr. Owen was instrumental in developing the department structure and envisioned and implemented much of the technology that we enjoy today. Mr. Owen retired in 2011 and has since returned to the department as a part time staff engineer.

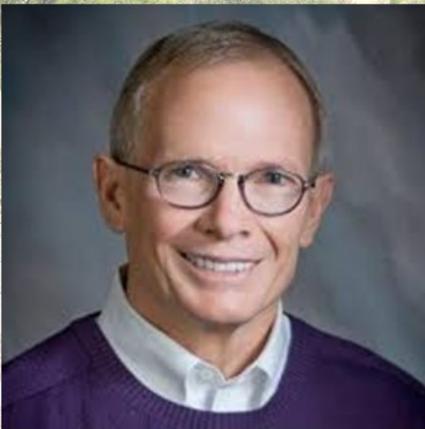
Scott Dalrymple

2005-2007

Mr. Dalrymple started with the Highway and Floodplain Department in 2000 as a staff engineer and was appointed director when Allon Owen stepped down prior to retirement. Mr. Dalrymple left in 2007 and went to work in the private sector. He is currently with the Department of the Interior/ Bureau of Land Management (BLM).



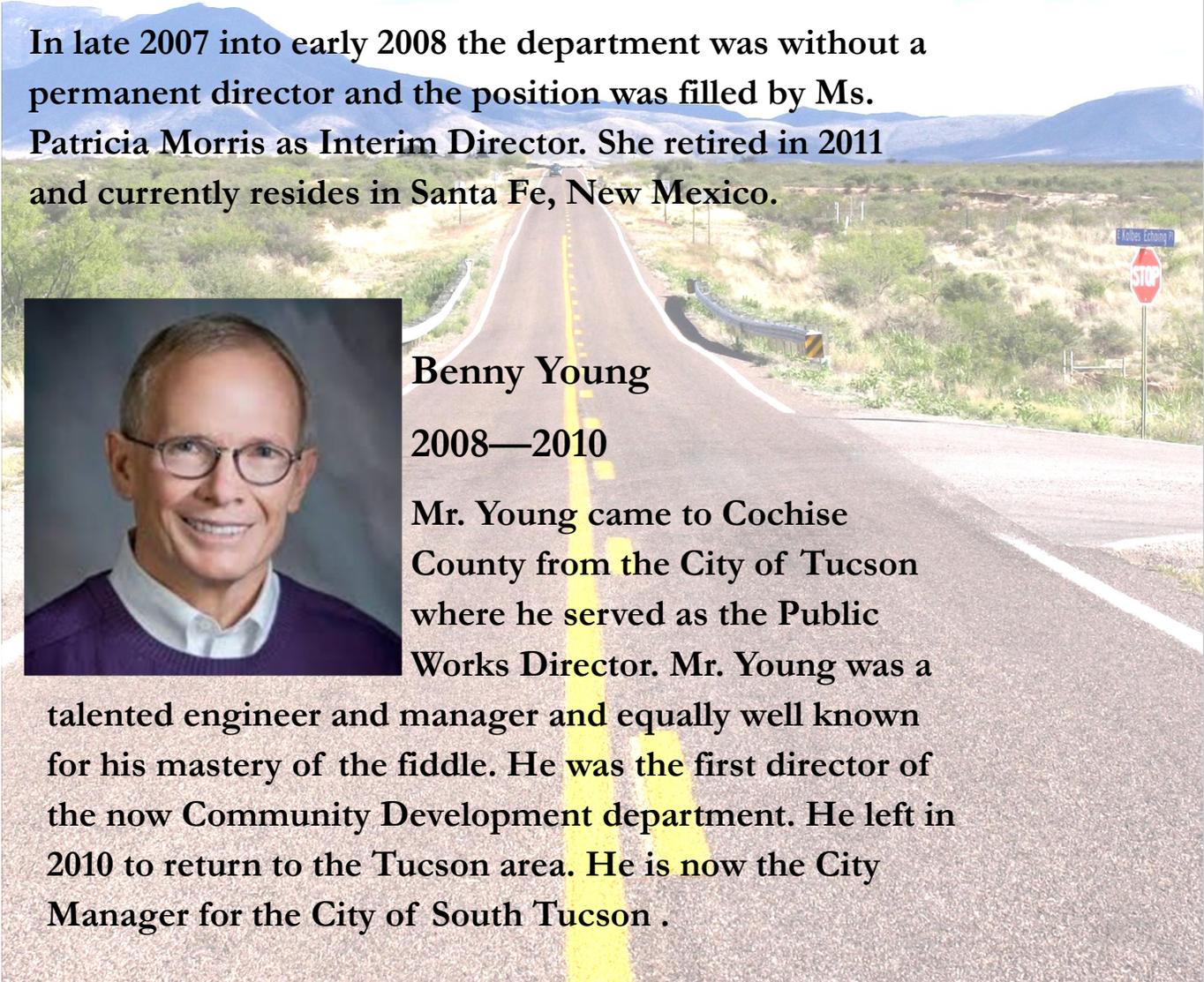
In late 2007 into early 2008 the department was without a permanent director and the position was filled by Ms. Patricia Morris as Interim Director. She retired in 2011 and currently resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Benny Young

2008—2010

Mr. Young came to Cochise County from the City of Tucson where he served as the Public Works Director. Mr. Young was a talented engineer and manager and equally well known for his mastery of the fiddle. He was the first director of the now Community Development department. He left in 2010 to return to the Tucson area. He is now the City Manager for the City of South Tucson .





Carlos De La Torre

2010—2012

Mr. De La Torre came to Cochise County after spending several years as the City of Douglas Public Works Director. Mr. De La Torre left in 2012 to become the City Manager for the City of Douglas.

Present Director

Karen Riggs

2012—Present

Ms. Riggs has been with Cochise County off and on since 1986. She first started as a Hydrologic Engineer working with Allon Owen in the Floodplain Department. Approximately 3 months prior to leaving in 1988 she was the Interim Floodplain Administrator when Mr. Owen became the director of the department. Karen came back in 1993 as a special projects engineer and departed in 2000 to pursue other interests (ranching and motherhood) as well as working in private industry as an engineer. In 2007, Karen returned to Cochise County as a Floodplain engineer. In 2011 she became the County Engineer and after the departure of Mr. De La Torre, Karen was appointed as the Director of Highway and Floodplain.



Dirt Roads

What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved. There's not a problem in America today, crime, drugs, education, divorce, delinquency, that wouldn't be remedied if we just had more Dirt Roads, because Dirt Roads give character.

People that live at the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride. That it can jar you right down to your teeth sometimes, but it's worth it, if at the end is home... a loving spouse, happy kids and a dog. We wouldn't have near the trouble with our educational system if our kids got their exercise walking a Dirt Road with other kids, from whom they learn how to get along.

There was less crime in our streets before they were paved. Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape, if they knew they'd be welcomed by 5 barking dogs and a double barrel shotgun. And there were no drive by shootings.

Our values were better when our roads were worse.

People did not worship their cars more than their kids, and motorists were more courteous, they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust and bust your windshield with rocks.

Dirt Roads taught patience.

Dirt Roads were environmentally friendly, you didn't hop in your car for a quart of milk you walked to the barn for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mail box.

What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out?

That was the best part, then you stayed home and had some family time, roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn and pony rides on Daddy's shoulders... and you learned how to make prettier quilts than anybody.

At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap. Most paved roads lead to trouble, Dirt Roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole. At the end of a Dirt Road, the only time we even locked our car was in August, because if we didn't some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini.

At the end of a Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income, from when city dudes would get stuck, you'd have to hitch up a team and pull them out. Usually you got a dollar

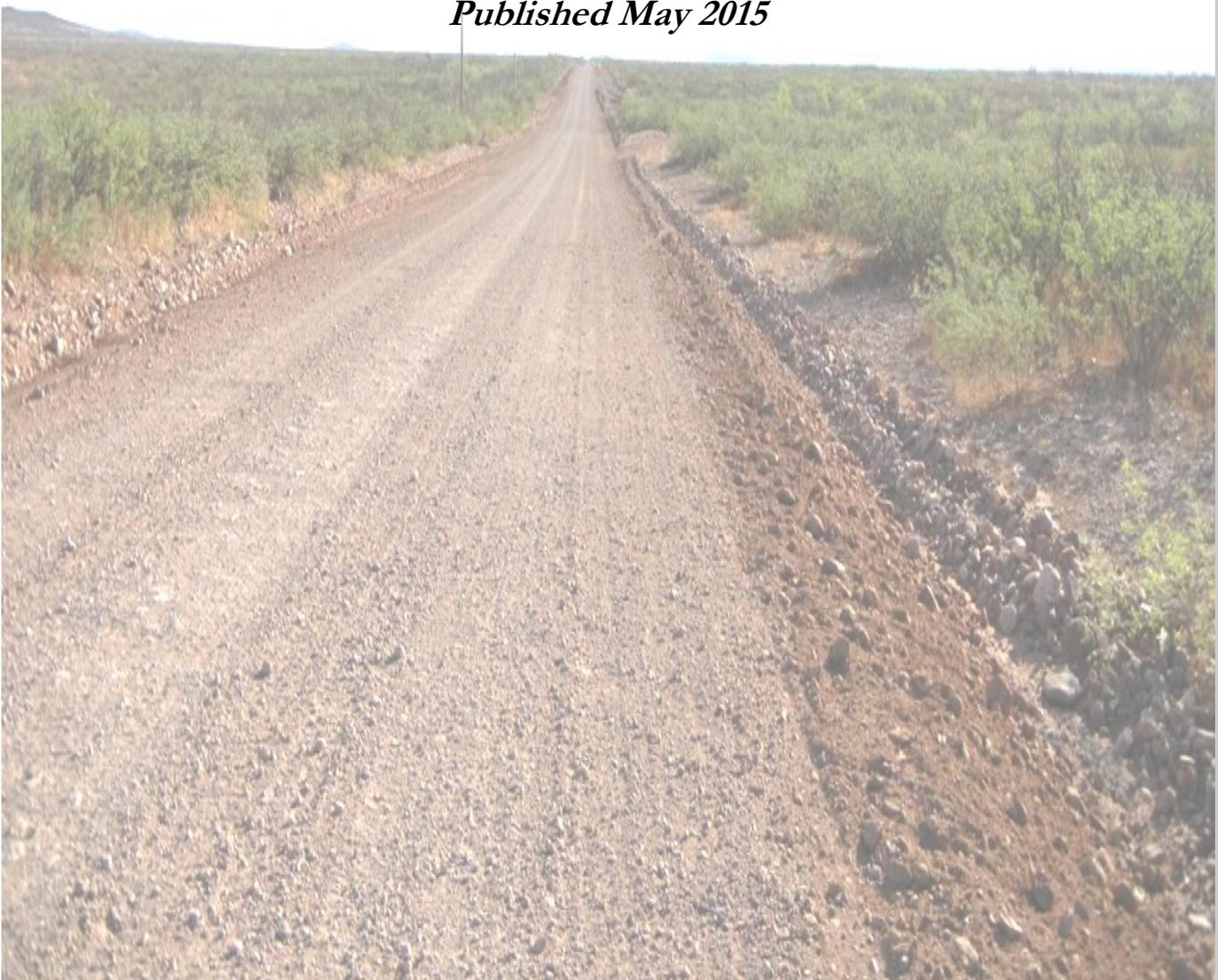
... always you got a new friend
...at the end of a Dirt Road.

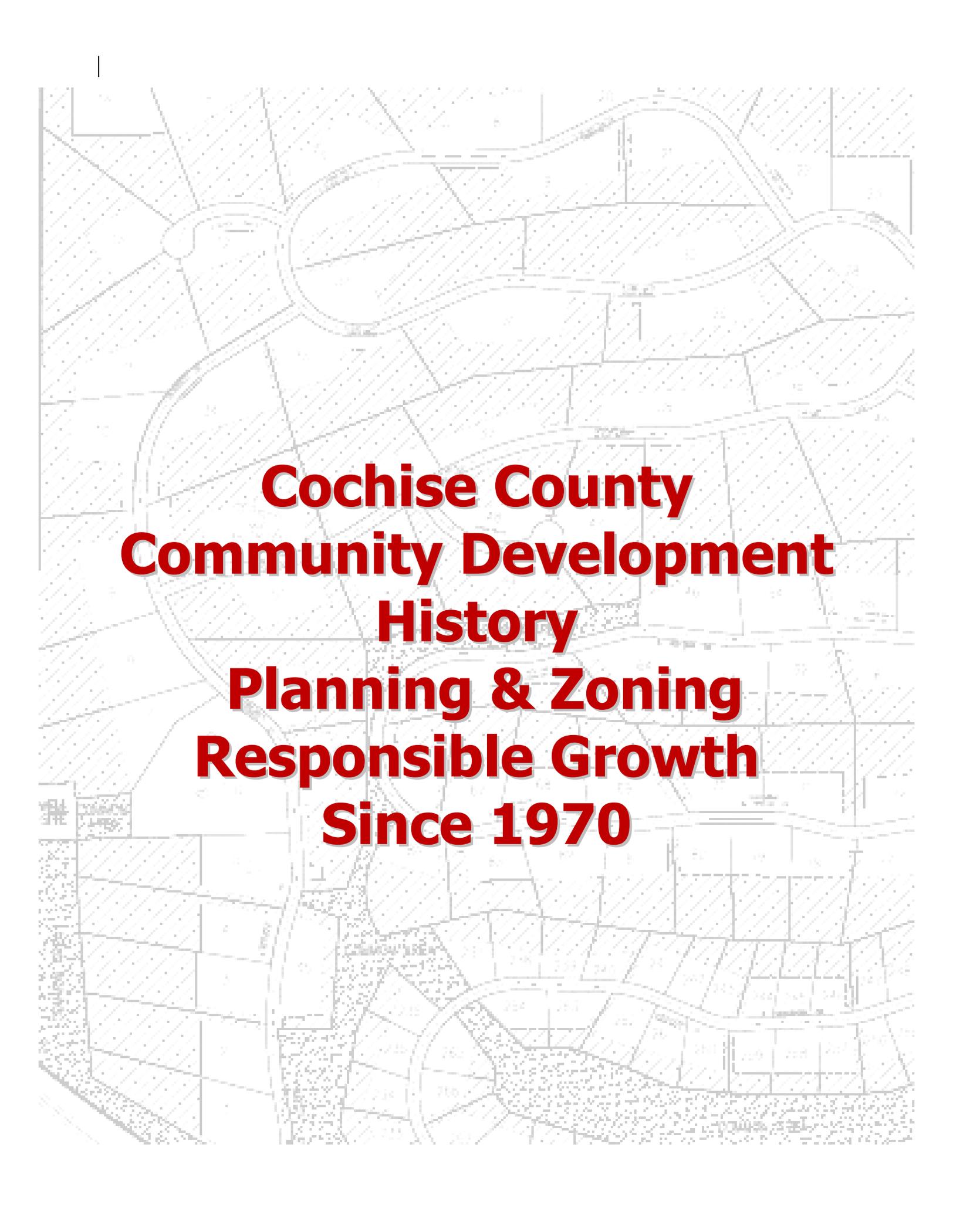
by Author Lee Pitts - quoted by Paul Harvey



Photos courtesy of:
Arizona State Archives
Highway Department Staff
Highway Department Records

Published May 2015





**Cochise County
Community Development
History
Planning & Zoning
Responsible Growth
Since 1970**

Cochise County Planning & Zoning History

Beginnings

On February 20th, 1970 the first surviving minutes of the Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission reference a previous meeting on January 30th 1970. In this meeting the Committee discussed hiring a Planning Director. During the Commission meeting on April 8th, 1970 it was agreed to place an ad for Cochise County's first Planning Director which read:



JOB AVAILABLE IN PLANNING AND ZONING

Arizona

Bisbee, Arizona, Planning Director, Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission. Salary to \$12,000, depending on qualifications.

Graduate from an accredited college or university with specialized study in planning, public administration, architecture, engineering or related fields. At least three years recent experience in the field of urban planning and zoning including supervisory experience. Commission organized 30 January 1970 and is preparing to apply for 701 funds for planning to carry out comprehensive planning program. Cochise County lies just north of the Mexican border, 5,000 elevation, mild winters, moderate summers. 66,800 population in 6,256 square miles. Ideal place to live, America's foremost growth potential.

Send resume to:

J. Pitts Jarvis, Jr., Member
Cochise County Planning and zoning Commission
Star Route, Box 360
Hereford, Arizona 85615 ¹⁰

Minutes from the September 9th, 1970 recorded that Mr. James Altenstadter became the first Planning Director for Cochise County.

Filling out the Staff

The needs of the Planning Department grew soon after the hiring of the Planning Director. Below is a listing of first time hires for positions as the department grew.

- **Planning Secretary** - In December of 1970 Mrs. Dorothy Meagher became the Planning Office Secretary, becoming the first staff member for the Planning Department. She split her time evenly between the Planning Department and Civil Defense.¹

- **Planner / Planning Intern** - The first Planning Intern, Mr. Bill Garrett, began work on June 1st, 1971.⁸
- **Transportation Planner** - In a Planning Commission meeting, Mr. William Costello was hired part-time as the first employee dedicated to Transportation Planning on the 13th of September, 1972.
- **Inspectors** - The hiring of three Inspectors was announced on the 11th of December 1974. These initial inspectors were Mr. John Page, Mr. Chris Hill, and Mr. Bob Conley.

Adoption of Regulations and Codes

Zoning Regulations

On December 18th 1974 the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution Number 74-28, approving the County's first Zoning Regulations. The Zoning Regulations were adopted to promote and protect the public health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the citizens of Cochise County by guiding development within the unincorporated are of the County.²

Building Code Implementation

With Resolution 04-117, December 14th 2004, the Cochise County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2003 Edition of the International Building Code and set a phased implementation plan over the course of three fiscal years. This resolution expanded the use of building code from the incorporated areas of Benson and Sierra Vista to the unincorporated areas of Cochise County.

Developing Attractions

J. Paul Malmberg and Jeff Dexter of Arizona State Parks made a presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission on May 10th 1989.⁶ The presentation included initial proposals for planning the development of Kartchner Caverns as an attraction, as well as concerns for developing businesses near the park. There was concern that tourism based businesses might develop too fast and not mesh with the unveiling of the park. Arizona State Parks envisioned a multi-agency cooperative effort from the County, the City of Benson, and various other agencies to assist in overall planning for the site and surrounding areas. After years of planning, coordination, and construction, the park opened nearly a decade later on November 5th, 1999.⁷



Photo: Courtesy Arizona State Parks

Response to Disaster

In June of 2011 Planning and Zoning worked together with the Highway and Floodplain Department and other agencies within the County after the Monument Fire. The County established a mobile office on the site of Huachuca Baptist Oaks Camp as well as manning the offices in Bisbee and Sierra Vista in a joint effort to conduct inspections and issue permits. These offices expanded hours to 12 hours a day 7 days a week during the



Photo: 2011 Monument Fire <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Monument-Fire-AZ/>

disaster recovery period to better serve the needs of citizens. 96⁵ permits were issued on the spot and at no cost to residents to facilitate electrical repairs, structural repairs, and demolition when required. Inspectors performed onsite inspections to determine the extent of damage and determine eligibility for disaster funding.³ Chuck Cooper, an inspector with Planning and Zoning, led the cleanup effort. He supervised inmates cleaning debris from burned homes and other structures. His efforts were instrumental in the clean up phase of recovery.⁴

Rural Addressing

Beginning in 1989 as a volunteer effort in Sierra Vista, the Rural Addressing project built reliable addressing for the County's 911 emergency services. The effort was soon transitioned to full time employees. During the 1990's it would not be uncommon for a citizen to see a County vehicle trekking across desert roads, documenting addresses, and confirming GPS locations as Planning and Zoning employees confirmed every address in the County. These efforts extended to assisting incorporated towns, such as Bisbee, in establishing a workable address system. The invaluable early efforts to improve reliable emergency services is an ongoing service that assists contractors, businesses, and residents with emergency service and viable physical addresses for mail and other deliveries.¹²

Today

The Planning and Zoning Department has grown into Community Development. The department assists residential property owners with improvements, additions, obtaining valid addresses, and remodeling within internationally accepted Building Codes.

Planning helps shape the community of the County. Planners work closely with the Planning Commission to assist residents and commercial ventures seeking to improve and do business in Cochise County. When special circumstances arise they assist residents through Variances and the Special Use application process. Planners help assure proper zoning and recommend changes to the Zoning Regulations as needed.



Photo: Redhorse Solar Project as seen from an aerial view March 2015

The Commercial Section assists commercial ventures in economic and infrastructure development. They are involved in alternative energy projects including wind and solar generation plants. The Section coordinates between agencies to assure seamless interagency interaction on commercial projects that bring energy, recreation, religious activities, and job creation to Cochise County.

The Code Enforcement Officer assists citizens and business owners in conforming to Zoning Regulations.

Building inspectors are involved in every facet of development from reviewing plans for conformance to codes to inspecting new construction projects.

Community Development has helped the County grow since its beginnings. From helping in recovery from legal and natural disasters, to playing a part in forging a new, economically robust future Community Development supports the citizens of Cochise County.



Photo Public Domain

Sources

- ¹ Cochise County Archives', Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes 12/23/1970.
- ² Cochise County Zoning Administrator Records, Cochise County Board of Supervisors Resolution Number 74-28, 18/12/1975
- ³ Information from Brett (Lee) Sipe, Cochise County Building Inspector and Plans Examiner, 4/2/15
- ⁴ Information from Dora Flores, Cochise County Zoning Administrator, 4/2/2015
- ⁵ Information from Planning and Zoning, Building Division Records 6/24/11 – 7/18/11
- ⁶ Cochise County Archives, Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes 10/5/1990
- ⁷ Charles R. Eatherly, Arizona State Parks Website, URL <http://azstateparks.com/Parks/KACA/history.html>
- ⁸ Cochise County Archives, Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes, 12/5/1971
- ⁹ Cochise County Archives, Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes, 13/10/1971
- ¹⁰ Cochise County Archives, Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes, 8/4/1970
- ¹¹ Information from Planning and Zoning, Building Division Records 7/14/2004 & 11/8/2004
- ¹² Information from conversation with Sally Snowball, 4/22/15

*Photos not credited by Trevor Smith

Cochise County Legacy Project Community Development



Combined History

Community Development Department; The Joining of Forces

In 2010, the Planning Department and Highway Departments were combined to form a Community Development Department. The vision for this new organization was to provide Cochise County residents with a one-stop permitting process. This concept remains unique among Arizona Counties as the CDD is able to issue permits for building, zoning, sanitary septic, wells, rights-of-way, and flood in one place using one Joint Application.



The first CDD Director was Benny Young, who served until early 2011 . He was followed by Carlos De La Torre, who left in July of 2012. Since 2012, Karen Riggs, Highway and Floodplain Director and Beverly Wilson, Planning Director, have jointly led this Department of currently 84 employees (down from 124 in about 2006). The department has consolidated tasks that were once separate such as payroll, travel, and records retention accountability to

State Library. In addition we have merged the telephones into one convenient customer service system. Working together and with staff, we have streamlined the processes, opened communication, added work stations to the front space, and finally put two Community Development Department Technicians in the front lobby. Dominique Lopez and Trevor Smith have served to bridge the operations of both departments and provide improved customer service to the public both by phone and in person. Their friendly manner and cheerful personas have provided a welcome addition to the entire department.

Since 2012, the Planning Division of the new department has assumed other county tasks including the management of permitting, reporting, and inspecting sanitary septic systems for the County. All well permits are now processed through CDD, before sending to the State. CDD has also taken over the Environmental Health 24-hour complaint lines, dealing with issues of suspected food poisoning, complaints of dirty public swimming pools, and other environmental health issues involving sewage and other garbage. This has streamlined the service and made better use of staff and resources in several departments.



In spite of falling revenue, these changes have enabled improved customer service from the Community Development Department to the citizens of Cochise County.