

# Housing Programs & Services

NEWSLETTER

## Home Rule

Proposition 100 (Home Rule) is on the ballot in March. Home Rule is the option under which citizens and the city council they elect make annual budget decisions for their city "at home" rather than using a State-imposed limitation.

In the summer of 1980 the State Legislature referred to the voters a constitutional amendment designed to limit the annual expenditures of all Arizona cities and towns by a formula. To determine the expenditure limitation, the State established 1979-1980 as a "base year." Added to this base year is an adjustment for population growth and inflation.

The base year is critical because it is the foundation upon which all future budget adjustments are made. Apache Junction is unique in Arizona in that the base year was the City's very first complete fiscal year. The 1979-80 fiscal year was not a typical year for the City – as it was for most communities in Arizona – it was the year we were just getting started, as a result we had a very small budget and population.

Looking at library services for example, there was no money in the 1979-80 budget for library services. For library services today, therefore, the State limitation would allow zero dollars to be adjusted for inflation and growth. Zero times zero is still zero.

If voters renew Home Rule once again as they have each election since 1985: It will not affect balancing the budget. We are already required by State law to have a balanced budget. What it will do is allow the City to spend the general fund mon-

ies it already has for programs and services its citizens today feel are essential, things like police, parks, a library and services for all ages.

If voters reject Home Rule: It means that Apache Junction must set its annual budget under a State-imposed formula. This formula penalizes fast growth cities such as Apache Junction and Gilbert wherein inflation and old population figures do not reflect current needs and demand for services.



Failure means the State expenditure limitation will necessitate a cut of approximately one third of the general fund budget over four years. This reduction in expenditures amounts to \$ 8,936,408 for FY 2009-2010. It amounts to \$39,753,502 for the next four years. The general fund is what is used to pay for police, parks, libraries and general government services.

For more information on Home Rule or Proposition 100 contact the City of Apache Junction Public Information Office at (480) 474-5080, email [pbrenner@ajcity.net](mailto:pbrenner@ajcity.net), or visit the City's web page at [www.ajcity.net/homerule](http://www.ajcity.net/homerule). The City's government access TV CH 11 also broadcasts a brief 3.5 minute video about Home Rule at the top of every half hour and other times throughout the day. The video is also available as a web streamed production on [www.ajcity.net](http://www.ajcity.net).

If you have a question or comment about anything written in this newsletter, please contact:  
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## Notable News

**The IRS may owe YOU money!**  
You may qualify for federal tax credits and not even know it. The Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) are federal tax benefits for working people. Some workers can receive a refund even if they don't owe taxes! To claim the EIC and CTC, you must file a tax return. The City of Apache Junction in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service and AARP Tax Aide is offering two free tax preparation E-filing sites in Apache Junction beginning February 1st. The library will have services on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and the Moose Lodge will provide services on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

## Calendar

- **2/11—2/12/09** Homebuying Seminar
- **2/16/09** President's Day, honor our nation's great leaders. City offices are closed!
- **2/1/09—4/15/09** Free Tax preparation services available!
- **3/09** Medicare Workshops
- **4/09** Fair Housing Month.

## Housing Programs

Applications are being accepted for eligible homeowners to participate in the City's Housing Rehabilitation Program. This program assists homeowners with the rehabilitation of their home by addressing health and safety issues, correcting code violations and accumulated deferred home maintenance projects. Contact the Program Coordinator for information at (480) 474-2635 or visit the City's website at [www.ajcity.net/housing](http://www.ajcity.net/housing) for an application.

Medicare Workshops are currently being scheduled for the month of March. These workshops, sponsored by Desert Schools Federal Credit Union, will assist you with the program and the finances of Medicare. Please call 480-474-2635 for dates and location.

Are you or someone you know a first time homebuyer looking to buy a home? The Arizona Department of Housing in collaboration with the City of Apache Junction will be hosting a Homebuying Seminar on February 11th and 12th from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Seating is limited, therefore please contact Sandy at 602-771-1097 to reserve a seat.

Everyone is entitled to equal rights under the Fair Housing Law. If you feel you have been discriminated against, please contact Heather at 480-474-2635. To know your rights under the law, you can visit: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/FHLaws/>

For information on the Residential Landlord & Tenant Act visit: [http://www.azsos.gov/public\\_services/Publications/Residential\\_Landlord\\_Tenant\\_Act/](http://www.azsos.gov/public_services/Publications/Residential_Landlord_Tenant_Act/)

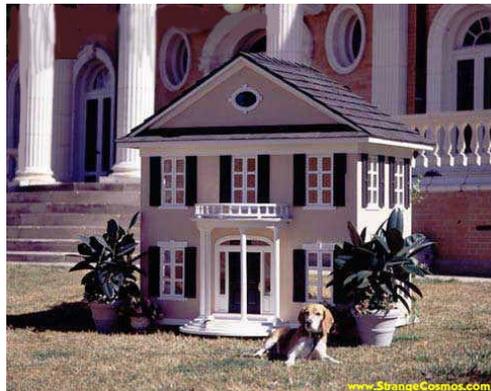
## RESOURCES

- Facing financial difficulties and possibly foreclosure? The Governor's Office has set up a website to assist families with finding resources and help in these trying economic times. Check out [www.az211.gov](http://www.az211.gov)
- Statewide Foreclosure Hotline: 1-877-448-1211
- Arizona Foreclosure Prevention Task Force: <http://www.arizonaforeclosuretaskforce.com/>
- Pinal County offers a special resource guide for human services throughout Pinal County. Check out their website at <http://www.pinalresources.org/>
- Don't Borrow Trouble: <http://www.dontborrowtroubleaz.org/>

## Housing Funnies

### HOUSING PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS:

1. Eliminate health and safety hazards in homes;
2. Benefit low to moderate income residents; and
3. Improve neighborhoods and encourage stability.



Luxury Living!

## Busy Bee Home Maintenance Tips

Each season brings new tasks and activities in your home. To keep your home safe and maintained it is recommended that you complete the following tasks in the Spring of each year.

- Clean windows and repair screens
- Unclog and secure gutters and downspouts
- Re-grade around foundation
- Clean air conditioning system
- Inspect and maintain laundry room and machines. Clean out the dryer vent to make certain it is free of lint buildup
- Test GFCI outlets. Ensure all outdoor outlets have the proper covers and are free from moisture
- Change furnace filters
- Change batteries in your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
- Inspect weather stripping and replace caulking around windows

Here are some energy saving ideas for your home:

Replace your light bulbs with CFL bulbs. They may be more expensive but they last longer and will help to decrease your energy bill. The most important thing is to shut off lights when not in a room and open your shades to let in the sun light.

Some video game systems will pull substantial amounts of electricity, even if they are on standby or not being played. If left on at all times, the Playstation and Xbox 360 can consume more than 1,000 kWh per year, which is a substantial amount of electricity, and twice that of a year's energy used by a newer refrigerator. Turning off game systems when not in use can save up to \$100 per year.

If you are unable to weatherize your own home or need assistance with your utility bills there are programs to help. Contact the City's Housing Program Coordinator for more information at (480) 474-2635.

*Bees Wishes*

