



Tucson Business Leaders Must Participate in Local Government



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I'm a member of a number of civic organizations in the greater Tucson area. I sit on the boards of the Southern Arizona Leadership Council (SALC) and the economic development group the Sun Corridor. I am a member of the Tucson Metro Chamber's Chairman's Circle and I support Greater Tucson Leadership. At many of the meetings I've been a part of, we have asked attending local officials, "What is the most important thing we can do to promote the increased prosperity of the community?"

The number one response from members of the City of Tucson (COT) Council and Pima County Board of Supervisors (BOS) is: "attend Council and BOS meetings."

Why is this important? **Because these officials want to have balanced discussions of important issues and proposals.** I have been in business in Tucson for more than 40 years, so I have experienced the shifts in attitudes about economic growth in the area. Economic growth and increased prosperity do not have to be detrimental to promoting healthier communities, preserving the natural environment or supporting the integrity of local neighborhoods. There are ways to balance competing needs. One of those ways is by working to ensure that government-based programs take into consideration the entire range of issues.

By attending Tucson City Council and Pima County Board of Supervisors' meetings, local business leaders can provide crucial balance to discussions that affect the region's economic prosperity.

Tucson and Pima County have vocal proponents of a "no growth" agenda. Compared to the business community, this faction seems to be better organized and have more members who can devote time to government hearings. This group is consistently represented at COT and BOS meetings where they often protest against or disparage proposed economic and growth initiatives.

The business community has to make a similar effort to represent its views. When business leaders attend local government hearings – even if they don't speak and regardless of the topic – they show that this sector of the community is involved in the region's decision-making processes.

Attendees at these meetings can also sign up when they arrive at the meeting to provide a statement of up to three minutes about the topics on the agenda. **This is the business community's chance to support initiatives that contribute to the economic well-being of the region.** City and county leaders have specifically expressed their desire to develop a PRO/CON framework for any issue discussed at public meetings. The business community must be represented to contribute to the PRO/CON assessment!

At COT and BOS meetings you also have a chance to see how local government works and how elected officials conduct themselves and represent their constituents. If we are going to pronounce ourselves "business leaders," we can't let our busy schedules prevent us from participating in these critical processes of our local government.

If you are interested in attending these meetings, feel free to contact Robert Medler at the Tucson Metro Chamber at rmedler@tucsonchamber.org or my office. We will be happy to help you navigate the process and ensure that your time is spent on the topics that are most important to the business community. You can find contact information on the Chamber's website www.TucsonChamber.org or BFL's website www.bflconstruction.com.