



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 8, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Pima County Back to Business (PCB2B) Community Outreach Subcommittee Assists with Business Reopening and Expansion**

In May 2020 the Pima County Back to Business (PCB2B) Committee formed a Community Outreach Subcommittee to address how Pima County should communicate with area residents and businesses about the framework of hygiene and physical distancing standards needed to fight the pandemic. The Subcommittee worked with the Pima County Communications Department, Hilton & Myers Advertising and REA Communications to provide regular develop communication with the public about the response to COVID-19. The group recognized that COVID-19 would have a significant impact on how businesses operated during the pandemic and how they would, when appropriate, resume normal activities. A campaign was launched in many mediums and in both Spanish and English, featuring graphics and collateral materials, print and broadcast advertisements.

The PCB2B Community Outreach Committee also acknowledged that in the economic development world, communities across the nation and beyond were developing strategies and messaging to help them be competitive in the new economic landscape.

To ensure that Pima County is ready to both assist with the retention of local businesses and attract new employers to the area, Pima County appropriately earmarked some federal relief funds to a partnership with Sun Corridor Inc. This collaboration enabled international and national corporate executives to be exposed to Pima County and assisted with the positioning of the region as a vital business center.

An initial survey reinforced that Tucson and Pima County is one of the most dynamic business centers in the Southwest and noted our industry strengths in aerospace and defense, bioscience and healthcare, natural resources/alternative energy technologies, and transportation and logistics.

A summary of the efforts, as reported by Sun Corridor Inc. is attached.

CHH/mp

Attachments

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
John Moffatt, Economic Development Director

What's Next, Post Pandemic?

Raising the Profile of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Background

COVID-19 first impacted the regional economy in mid-March 2020, resulting in social distancing to curb the spread of coronavirus, stay at home orders, closing of schools and a free fall in the local travel, restaurant and tourism business.

The uncertainty of the outbreak has hit the national and Southern Arizona economy at its very core. Current unemployment stands at nearly 13% (BLS, April 2020), and local governments are experiencing a free fall in tax revenue.

On the business development front, our competitors are repositioning themselves and pivoting messaging to meet the projected needs of site selectors and corporate relocation decision makers when their expansion projects will be ready to move forward, post COVID-19, in a new economic landscape.

It is time to double down on marketing Tucson and Southern Arizona so we win our fair share of economic development deals when companies are ready to choose a community that meets their changing needs, now and in the future.

Why an Increased Push of National PR?

Year after year, economic development research shows the importance of national media as a source of information about communities. In annual Atlas Advertising surveys, over 70% of respondents rank news stories as an important source of information. The same survey of corporate executives finds that the following three factors influence their impressions of communities:

- Word of mouth, existing relationships
- **PR/Articles in newspapers and magazines**
- Business travel

It's clear wider exposure of Tucson and Southern Arizona and positioning the region as a business center is needed. National PR firms are experts in impactful story packaging and have the critical relationships to secure premier placement in prominent media outlets.

Key goals:

- Increase national/international awareness of the entire Southern Arizona region as a business center.
- Drive messaging of community strengths, post COVID-19.
- Generate buzz in site selector and corporate boardrooms.

New Messaging Based on Past Success

Tucson and Southern Arizona have a strong economic foundation.

- Tucson/Southern Arizona is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing major business centers in the Southwest.
- With our industry strengths in aerospace and defense, bioscience and healthcare, natural resources/alternative energy technologies, and transportation and logistics, businesses in Southern Arizona are leading the way in innovation.
 - Notable employers who have chosen Tucson to establish a major new presence or expand over the past 15 years include:
 - Raytheon Missiles & Defense
 - Caterpillar Surface Mining and Technology Division
 - HomeGoods
 - Amazon
 - Target.com
 - Bombardier
 - WorldView
 - TuSimple
 - Roche Tissue Diagnostics
- Sun Corridor Inc. has facilitated the attraction and expansion of 174 businesses, supporting over 50,000 new jobs that have resulted in an economic impact of over \$29 billion over the last 15 years.

Tucson ranks highly now, and in a post-COVID economic environment.



**Tucson Ranked Top 10 U.S. City
to Best Recover From
Coronavirus
Forbes, 2020**

[**LEARN MORE**](#)



**Tucson Relocations
Increase Among Technical
Professionals
Yahoo! News, 2020**

[**LEARN MORE**](#)



**Tucson Ranked #1
City for Largest Spike in Google
Home Searches
LendingTree, 2020**

[**LEARN MORE**](#)

July 2019 – Tucson ranked #1 of up-and-coming tech talent markets

[Read about the ranking here.](#)

[Watch national recognition on CNBC.](#)

Summer 2019 – Tucson named one of the U.S.' Fastest Growing Technology Metropolises in 2019.

[Read about the ranking here.](#)

January 2020 – Tucson ranked One of Ten Best Cities for Startup Costs

[Read about the ranking here.](#)

December 2019 – Tucson ranked One of 35 Potential Innovation Centers

[Read about the ranking here.](#)

Southern Arizona has key strengths post-COVID-19:

- Mid-sized market with affordable costs for onshoring opportunities
- Proximity to Mexico for near-shoring opportunities
- Wide open spaces attract young professionals deeply impacted by crowded, expensive urban markets
- Anchored by a top 20 research university and an emerging tech scene

Deliverables

New Messaging, post COVID-19

Media pitches

Fact sheets

Outcomes

- Earn powerful media coverage
- Get top Southern Arizona leaders airtime to promote business strengths
- Increase project inquiries

Leveraging Media Coverage/Promotion of Stories

