

Sports and Entertainment Destination

August 12, 2006 irrevocably establishes Glendale, Arizona as a sports and entertainment destination.

I am often told that no one expected Glendale to emerge and thrive in this way.

In the early 1990's, Glendale was synonymous with agriculture. Property owners in our western area were active farmers and ranchers. Everyone for miles around recognized the livestock smell. Who would build in the midst of cattle, chickens, and crops?

Development in western Glendale was thought to be decades away. The Loop 101 ended at Northern Avenue and would not connect to the I-10 until December 2007. "No freeway - no development" is the rule in Maricopa County.

Gubernatorial edict in 1994 decreed funds were insufficient to build regional transportation projects voted for in 1985. We lost all routes except the Loop 101. Projections changed a year later. My responsibility as Chairman of the MAG Regional Council was to lead efforts to rebuild the plan. The Loop 101 to I-10 connection was accelerated to 2000.

Urbanization was encroaching on agriculture. Property owners wanted to sell and move. Selling was easy. Moving was a nightmare. Especially when it came to the 5000 cows and two million chickens between Northern Avenue and Bethany Home Road.

The Loop 101 connection opened in October 2000 – seven years early. Homebuilders were ready with plans. I believed land bordering the Loop 101 should be put to more productive use. Developers said mid-range residential housing was the best I could hope for. I told them they were wrong.

In mid-1999 western Glendale was considered by USAA for a regional campus with thousands of jobs. Phoenix was chosen instead. I was devastated.

In 2001 Michael Bidwill encouraged Glendale to bid for the new Cardinals Stadium. Because we did not meet their criteria of having existing amenities, we declined.

In April 2001 Glendale announced plans for the Glendale Arena and the massive Westgate project. In August 2002 Glendale was selected for the Cardinals Stadium.

The Cardinals Stadium, Glendale Arena, and Westgate are all on the same land USAA rejected. The new Bethany Home/Loop 101 interchange and Maryland Avenue overpass are where 5000 dairy cows used to live. Overflow stadium parking is where 2 million chickens used to live.

Glendale leaders believed in our potential when others wouldn't. We waited for the best opportunities. With tremendous support from our wonderful residents, we are ready for this historic day.

Welcome to Glendale!