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Ak-Chin Celebrates Completion of Initial Improvements to Regional Airport

Additional Improvements Planned for Former Phoenix Regional Airport

MARICOPA, Ariz. (December 14, 2012) – The Ak-Chin Industrial Park Board and Ak-Chin Community Council hosted an Open House for tribal members, business VIP’s, and select media today. The event was held to thank the project’s participants, business partners, and Community supporters, and to give other interested parties a chance to see plans for the next phase of renovations. The celebration included food, prize drawings, and a classic plane exhibit furnished by airport business neighbors, Desert Rat Aviation and Alpha Tech Coatings.

The first phase of airport renovations included repaving and remarking the approximately 5,000 foot runway and taxiway; installing a new beacon and wind cone; and upgrading the Fixed Base Operations (FBO) Building. In the next phase of renovations, the Community hopes to reactivate the fueling system and install runway lighting, airport fencing, an extended apron with additional tie-downs, and permanent signage on the FBO Building. Eventually, the Community would like to add T-shades and T-hangars.

Armstrong Consultants, who specializes in airport engineering, created the design for improvements at the airport. The implementation of the design was completed by a joint venture between AJP Electric and Pioneer Builders, both of Phoenix. AJP, who had successfully completed upgrade projects for other municipal airports, including Eloy, Payson, Lake Havasu City and Scottsdale, spearheaded the heavy construction while Pioneer Builders, which specializes in tenant improvements, handled the construction of the structure that houses the electrical infrastructure. Upgrades to both the exterior and interior of the FBO Building were performed by Marbecc Custom Designs of Fountain Hills.

The former Phoenix Regional Airport property, which encompasses approximately 170 acres, was purchased in 2006 and was renamed Ak-Chin Regional Airport following a month-long Airport Renaming Contest held in the Community in October 2011. Ak-Chin also owns approximately 235 acres surrounding the airport and an adjacent property that is bordered by Peters and Nall Road, Russell Road, Antone Street, and the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway. These properties are part of a fee-to-trust application that the Community has made with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). These properties border just east of the Santa Cruz Commerce Center, the Ak-Chin’s industrial park, which is already a part of the reservation.

“The transfer will enable us to operate our industrial interests more efficiently,” said Charles Carlyle, Ak-Chin Industrial Park Board Chairman. “It is very hard to attract tenants and employees when different rules apply.”

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Although there has been some opposition to the transfer, citing a loss of property tax revenue, most people support the application, realizing that Ak-Chin has proven itself to be supportive of city and county interests like education and jobs growth. Ak-Chin is one of Pinal County's largest employers and 98% of its workforce comes from off reservation—purchasing goods and services off reservation, and paying taxes in the cities in which they reside. In 2010, Ak-Chin donated \$3.2 million to the Maricopa Unified School District.

“Our goal is to be good neighbors and good citizens,” said Terry Enos, a member of both the Ak-Chin Industrial Park Board and Community Council. “We hope by fostering communication and goodwill we can provide opportunities not only for our Community, but for the larger community as well. Not because we have to, but because it is the right thing to do.”

About the Ak-Chin Industrial Park Board

The Ak-Chin Indian Community Council established the Ak-Chin Industrial Park Board to develop, operate and manage the Community properties known as the Santa Cruz Commerce Center, Santa Cruz Office Center and Ak-Chin Regional Airport. Charles Carlyle is chairman of the four-member board, which includes two additional Community Members—Maria Hernandez and Terry Enos—and one at-large member—Leonard Gold. The mission of the Ak-Chin Industrial Park Board is to create a business environment that offers significant advantages to its tenants and encourages business innovation and jobs growth for both the Ak-Chin Indian Community and the surrounding communities at large.

About Ak-Chin Indian Community

The Ak-Chin Indian Community is located in the Santa Cruz Valley of Southern Arizona. The Community lies 58 miles south of Phoenix in the northwestern part of Pinal County. The Community is comprised of more than 900 tribal members and is governed by a five-member Community Council—Louis Manuel Jr., Chairman; William J. Antone, Vice Chairman; Delia M. Carlyle; Terry Enos; and Gabriel L. Lopez—which oversees the governmental operations and departments that service the Community. For more information, visit www.ak-chin.nsn.us.

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