

Updates from ADEQ on septic & sewer

By Shanana Rain BearCat

Community Liaison for Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Melissa Hayes spoke with local business owners Thursday, August 18 at Quartzsite Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism's Breakfast meeting. Hayes shared updates about the condition of the old Ted's Truck Stop, local septic systems, and the sewer plant. It was admitted that ADEQ provided the Town misinformation and they apologized for that.

A bit of background- Since 2009 Town Council have been holding discussions seeking funding for a sewer expansion project. On June 7, 2013, former Town Manager Laura Bruno announced to the Council, "ADEQ has made it very clear that they are not approving any further development until we have done something..." about expanding/upgrading the sewer plant. Former Town Engineer Kevin Murphy explained how the current sewer plant limits town growth.

However ADEQ representatives informed attendees at the breakfast meeting that there is plenty of capacity for growth in the town. Desert Messenger asked Caroline Oppleman, ADEQ's Public Information Officer to clarify details for its readers. Oppleman provided the following answers in an email.

When asked about limitations on septic systems, she stated, "State septic rules allow homeowners and businesses with septic systems to perform routine work on a septic system including replacing a septic tank and adding no more than 10 feet of additional disposal area on their property without coming in for a new permit [Rule citation-Arizona Administrative Code R18-9-A309 (A)(9)]."

Question: Is ADEQ allowing new septic systems in Quartzsite?

ADEQ Answer: "While there is no moratorium on septic permitting in the Town, both the County and ADEQ have agreed to implement a strategy requires new septic systems in some locations in the Town of Quartzsite be constructed with denitrification to reduce the impact of septic waste on the aquifer beneath Quartzsite, which was contaminated by nitrates. ADEQ is prepared to reexamine the strategy in light of the Town's concerns."

As long as the Town can prove it's environmentally sound to add the northwest quadrant onto the sewer system, they can do that? Is our present sewer capacity adequate for additional load?

ADEQ Answer: "ADEQ has no reason to believe that adding additional sewage collection systems in any part of the Town would pose an environmental or public health risk. New sewer lines must meet state requirements to be permitted. As a part of permitting, the Town must certify to ADEQ that the treatment plant can accommodate additional flows from expected growth and seasonal visitors."

She added, "ADEQ has issued three sewage system permits since 2013."

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment, and our permitting processes are designed to maximize environmental protection.

Conclusion is - if your septic fails, your property is not rendered unusable, as reported. Contact the Town of Quartzsite, La Paz County & ADEQ. They will work with you to find the best solution. For more information visit www.azdeq.gov.

Town Hall can be reached at 928-927-4333.
Website is www.QuartzsiteAZ.org

Governor's Office of Youth, Faith & Family Youth Commission Class of 2016-17 includes Quartzsite's Jonathon McElwain

My name is Jonathan "Jack" McElwain and I am proud to announce my recent reappointment into Governor Ducey's Youth Commission (GYC). The GYC, comprised of fifty-one high-schoolers representing all 15 counties, has been serving the state since 1989. Together we focus on helping to solve some of the greatest issues facing teens in Arizona. The five issue areas are substance abuse, bullying, teen dating violence, distracted driving, and promoting civics education among youth.

As a commissioner we serve on a board, participate in committees, plan service projects, and events. We become part of the solution by partnering with teachers, parents, schools, community organizations, and local businesses. As one of the two La Paz county GYC representatives, my constituent base is mostly the rural portions of La Paz. Specifically, I will be working on the civics education committee to do my part in taking the lead and inspiring other youth in my community to do the same.

Last year GYC had a friendly competition between all 15 counties of Arizona, recording all the youth volunteer activities during the Oct-Jan period. At the end of this period La Paz County won, with 752 youth and 5,647 hours. The youth groups of La Paz were then invited in the spring to attend an ice cream social with Governor Ducey at the State Capital.

The state of Arizona continues to hold the world's number one ranking in youth led service projects for Global Youth Service Day. Last year Arizona youth served over 94,000 volunteer hours and we're looking to top that this year.

Please visit our website BeSeenBeHeard.az.gov frequently to stay up to date on our innovative programs, events, and campaigns that truly engage youth. I would welcome your support in getting this message out to your contacts and to help spread the word about our amazing service record.

Sincerely,
Jack McElwain

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