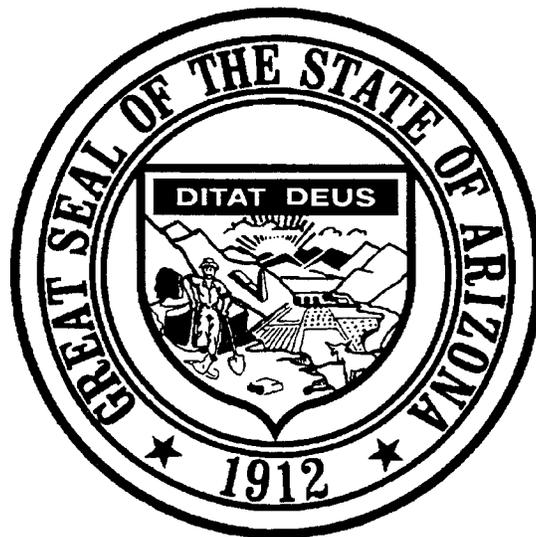


1997
GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON SMALL BUSINESS

FINAL REPORT



OCTOBER 31, 1997

1997
GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON SMALL BUSINESS
FINAL REPORT

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ARIZONA SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCATE

JANE DEE HULL
GOVERNOR

JACKIE VIEH
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH T. DEAN
ADVOCATE
AZ SMALL BUSINESS

The Honorable Jane Dee Hull
Governor
State of Arizona

Dear Governor Hull:

On behalf of the delegates to the 1997 Governor's Conference on Small Business, I am pleased to present to you the final report and recommendations from the event.

The delegates, sponsors, exhibitors and steering committee thank you for the opportunity provided by this quadrennial conference. Your remarks were warmly welcomed by the small business community, and the cooperative attitude we received from your office and the legislative branch of state government was exceptional.

A copy of this report will be delivered to each member of the House and Senate. The top priority recommendations of each session have been grouped for quick perusal, followed by the general recommendations arising from the final vote.

We look forward to working with you to implement legislation addressing some of these important issues.

Respectfully,



Joseph T. Dean
Chairman

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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Arizona Chamber of Commerce
1221 East Osborn Road • Suite 100 • Phoenix, Arizona 85014

President and CEO

January 21, 1998

The Arizona Chamber of Commerce was a proud sponsor of the 1997 Governor's Conference on Small Business. Overall, the Conference was an effective means for delivering the concerns of Arizona's small business owners and operators to the leaders of our state. Before the Conference, we sent out surveys to various small businesses to learn what they believed were the most important issues confronting their businesses.

During the Conference, legislators, regulators and small business owners participated in panel discussions on regulatory reform, quality of life issues, workforce development and taxation. Those panel discussions produced invaluable recommendations, included in this book, that will help guide our public policy agenda for the years to come.

The Arizona Chamber understands the unique concerns and perspective of Arizona's small businesses on cumbersome regulation and on burdensome taxes. We are committed to providing a better climate for small business development and expansion that will help make Arizona a better place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Tim Lawless
President and CEO

1997
GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON SMALL BUSINESS

**FINAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The quadrennial Arizona Governor's Conference on Small Business was held on Friday, October 31, 1997, at the Phoenix Civic Plaza. The conference was attended by small business owners, representatives of small business organizations, legislators, exhibitors and government agency representatives.

The goal of the conference was to seek concerns of the small business community which could be addressed by state government. This was accomplished. However, the overall success of the conference is questionable.

Unfortunately, the planned final vote to prioritize the lists of concerns from each of the breakout sessions, did not take place until after 5:00 p.m. Only 33 voting delegates remained to cast ballots. The results of the votes are in the section titled "General Recommendations."

This lack of representative voting skewed the final prioritization results. Recommendations are being made to prevent such an eventuality at future conferences.

A pre-conference survey distributed to several thousand small business owners received 628 responses. The results of this survey indicated considerably different concerns. The survey follows the Governor's Address.

The survey of businesses was used to establish the agenda for the conference. The topics chosen – taxes, regulatory reform, quality of life and workforce development – reflect the issues most clearly identified by the survey.

Excellent recommendations have been made for all of these areas. The items listed clearly reflect small business concerns. The order in which they have been ranked regarding priority, however, is somewhat invalid.

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**FINAL REPORT
GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS**

I'd like to begin by congratulating our conferees for their past successes, including the establishment of the Small Business Advocate office headed by Joe Dean, the Business Health Insurance Group within AHCCCS, the one-stop small business center at the Arizona Department of Commerce, and the \$50,000 personal property tax exemption. That's a lot of progress, and I intend to see that it continues.

Small businesses are one of the unsung heroes of our economy. Your happiness is everyone's happiness. You ask for lower income taxes, you get them. You ask for more property tax exemptions, you get them. When I was Speaker of the House, you asked for a trained workforce, so I sponsored the state job training program.

Why is promoting small business so important to me? Because it works.

That's why Arizona recognizes the importance of small business. Arizona has more than 400,000 businesses, 99.5% of which are small, with fewer than 100 employees or under \$4 million in annual revenue.

In fact, 41% of Arizona businesses are women-owned. Of the 200 calls the Arizona Business Connection gets every day, 60% to 70% are from minorities or women. That's a significant figure, because the U.S. Small Business Administration tells us that the greatest growth in small businesses comes from Hispanic women.

We all know that Arizona has been one of the fastest growing, most dynamic economies in the U.S. over the past 3 decades. After a severe economic recession from 1987 to 1992 that was concentrated in our real estate and construction industries, Arizona is once again "setting the pace".

It's tempting to recite a litany of impressive statistics regarding Arizona's performance over the past few years, but I will resist the temptation and focus instead on the challenges we must overcome.

Given how depressed Arizona's economy was in the late 80's and early 90's, we should be both grateful and pleased with what we have accomplished since then:

- Financial World magazine has rated our state financial position and budgeting practices as 9th best of the 50 states.
- Moody's Investor Services just upgraded our bond rating to A+.
- Our combined general fund and budget stabilization fund balances total nearly \$900 million.

This is all good news. However, the renewed vigor of the Arizona economy and our strong cash flow should not obscure some persistent and nagging problems that need our immediate attention.

- Although job gains are strong and inflation is low, our per capita income continues to lag well behind the national average.
- Although Arizonans are better educated than the nation as a whole, we are concerned about the quality of education in our children's classrooms.
- Although most Arizonans came here seeking our sun-splashed, wide desert vistas, we find ourselves facing tough choices related to the quality of life that drew us here in the first place.

So while we should congratulate ourselves for what we have done, we should understand that despite our recent record of accomplishment, the toughest choices may be immediately ahead.

Now that we have "righted the ship" and laid a firm financial foundation, we must "chart the course" for our future travels. There are several stubborn problems that have bedeviled state government and caused concern for our citizens for far too long.

As Governor, my policies will address these chronic problems squarely and forthrightly. I intend to use my office to bring Arizonans together to:

- Build a high quality public education system.
- Nurture and attract high paying jobs throughout the state, and
- Retain and improve upon the quality of life in Arizona.

While we will continue to cut taxes as we have for 5 straight years under Republican Leadership, I intend to do so in a way that keeps our tax structure balanced and fair. Generally, I believe that the base of any tax should be kept broad, so that tax rates can be kept low. Furthermore, we should keep an eye on neighboring states and make sure that our tax structure is not an impediment to economic development. Unfortunately, in a number of respects our tax structure is unbalanced and anti-competitive. However, my tax cut proposal will address these shortcomings.

Capital investment is critical to productivity gains and the creation of high-paying jobs. My tax policies will encourage, not discourage, investment in new plant and equipment.

Another key ingredient for a robust economy is a high quality and available labor supply. As Governor:

- I intend to refocus our attention on the classrooms of Arizona's public schools, so that new education dollars reach the classrooms for the benefit of our children.
- I will propose an increase in funding for job training and workforce development in order to help steer our non higher-education-bound high school graduates into well-paying technical or vocational jobs.
- I will also seek to strengthen the links between our university and community college systems and Arizona industries.

These are significant goals for a new administration. They are also realistic. Arizonans rightfully expect their state government to provide quality services and to solve the problems that are the responsibility of the state. Furthermore, Arizonans expect an ethical state government with a high degree of integrity. I will be addressing these concerns by focusing on reforms that empower state employees and sufficiently reward them for meritorious work.

In conclusion, while I am pro-business, I do not wish to favor either small or big business at the expense of the other. I understand each kind of business is unique.

After all, most small businesses dream of becoming a big business someday.

Advance Survey of Businesses

Surveyed: 990

Responses: 365

Response Rate: 36.87%



Arizona Small Business Association

Fax Survey & Results conducted by ADR International, Inc. Fax Services, August 1997. Phone 602-277-1200.

I. Demographic Information

Percent of Responses

How many people does your company currently employ?

0	12	3.29%	51-100	21	5.75%
1-5	137	37.53%	101-250	21	5.75%
6-10	47	12.88%	251-500	6	1.64%
11-25	66	18.08%	500+	6	1.64%
26-50	50	13.70%			

Which county is your company based?

Apache	0	0.00%	Mohave	3	0.82%
Cochise	0	0.00%	Navajo	2	0.55%
Coconino	7	1.92%	Pima	15	4.11%
Gila	0	0.00%	Pinal	4	1.10%
Graham	1	0.27%	Santa Cruz	1	0.27%
Greenlee	0	0.00%	Yavapai	12	3.29%
La Paz	1	0.27%	Yuma	3	0.82%
Maricopa	312	85.48%			

II. Small Business Issues

Select the five most important issues affecting your small business today.

Percent of Total Selections

Crime	150	9.51%
Welfare Reform	65	4.12%
Health Care	233	14.77%
Population Growth	109	6.91%
Taxes	289	18.31%
Environment	117	7.41%
Government Spending	173	10.96%
Transportation	124	7.86%
Regulatory Reform	144	9.13%
Education	128	8.11%
Electric Utility	46	2.92%
Deregulation		

Total Selections 1578

III. Taxes

The 1997 Arizona Legislature and Governor cut taxes by over \$100 million. If there is to be another reduction in 1998, which tax would you prefer to be cut?

Percent of Total Selections

Auto License	80	20.15%
Business Personal Prop.	52	13.10%
R.E. Commercial Property tax	21	5.29%
R.E. Residential Property tax	45	11.34%
Corporate Income Tax	43	10.83%
Personal Income Tax	121	30.48%
Sales Tax	29	7.30%
Other	6	1.51%

Total Selections 397

IV. Quality of Life Do you feel Arizona's air is,

365 Total Selections

Clean	18	4.93%	Somewhat Clean	75	20.55%	Somewhat Polluted	152	41.64%	Very Polluted	120	32.88%	Not Sure	0	0.00%
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V. Health Care

Do you provide Health Insurance for your employees?

362 Total Selections

Yes	259	71.55%	No	103	28.45%
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VI. Workers' Compensation

Would you be in favor of legislation that limits court discretion in

in determining which employee activities are eligible for workers' compensation benefit coverage?

336 Total Selections

Yes	236	70.24%	No	100	29.76%
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VII. Workforce Development

What is the work readiness of recent potential employees you have interviewed?

361 Total Selections

Satisfactory	25	6.93%	Adequate	129	35.73%	Poor	170	47.09%	Not Applicable	37	10.25%
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Would you be willing to have more emphasis placed on skill or vocational training in the community colleges?

352 Total Selections

Yes	307	87.22%	No	45	12.78%
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Do you currently offer child care benefits to attract and retain employees?

352 Total Selections

Yes	13	3.69%	No	339	96.31%
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Would you offer child care benefits if your company was given a tax credit?

333 Total Selections

Yes	141	42.34%	No	192	57.66%
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TAXES

MODERATOR

Tim Lawless

PANELISTS

Sandra Abalos
Marty Alvarez
Rep. Ken Chevront
Rep. Dean Cooley
Rep. Lori Daniels
Pat Derdenger
Chris Edmonson
Ira Feldman
Rep. Mike Gardner

Rep. Mike Gleason
Sen. Randall Gnant
Dan Lucas
Kevin McCarthy
Rep. Jean McGrath
Sen. Tom Patterson
Rep. Robin Shaw
Marquette White

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Governor and State Legislature of Arizona have based economic strategy on the philosophy that lower rates of taxation will result in an increasingly vital economy. Arizona's personal income tax rate has been cut several times during the last few years.

Lowering the personal income tax rate has played a vital role in establishing Arizona's friendly climate for small business. The vast majority of small businesses in Arizona are sole proprietorships, partnerships, Subchapter S Corporations and Limited Liability Companies and, as such, do not have a business income tax.

Governor Hull plans to continue the attack on state taxes. At this conference small business owners will jointly voice their opinions on where future tax reductions should occur.

If state taxes were to be cut next year, what areas would you prefer to have affected? Would you like to see further reductions in personal income tax? Or would you prefer cuts in business personal property tax, real property tax, corporate income tax, transaction privilege (sales) tax or even auto license fees? Would you like to have a reduction in state spending tied to tax reductions?

Take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to share your views with legislators and other experts on the critical subject of **TAXES**.

REGULATORY REFORM

MODERATOR Richard Bark

PANELISTS

Mary Lou Bessette
Truman Brandt
Sen. Brenda Burns
Rep. Dean Cooley
Michelle Crank
Rep. Mike Gardner
Knox Kimberley
Rep. Laura Knaperek
Rep. Jean McGrath

Gus Miller
Sen. Tom Patterson
Sen. Gary Richardson
Rep. Christine Weason

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Of all the Arizona Legislature's accomplishments to date, those dealing with regulatory reform have proven to be among the greatest in significance to the small business owner.

The Taxpayers' Bill of Rights stands out as a major achievement in Arizona. This extraordinary piece of legislation is recognized as one of the nation's leading programs to assist taxpayers. The Taxpayers' Bill of Rights clearly defines and protects Arizona residents' general rights as taxpayers and establishes procedures for dealing with the Department of Revenue regarding income and other taxes.

Some of the provisions of the legislation are:

- creation of the Taxpayer Assistance Office to protect against unfair treatment of taxpayers
- publication of private taxpayer rulings 30 days after issue to help prevent over- or under-payment of taxes due to lack of clarity in tax laws
- refinement of a formal appeals process
- provision for Taxpayer Assistance Orders which temporarily stop action against a taxpayer while issues are being investigated

Small business owners benefited significantly from other reform legislation which changed the way fines and penalties are handled by regulatory agencies. The majority of agencies imposing the fines and penalties no longer receive the resulting payments; instead, monies are credited to the state's general fund. In addition, the hearing officers who preside over most regulatory cases now report to a centralized office rather than to the agencies themselves.

This year's conferees will continue to identify and weigh regulatory practices which impact the small business owner, seeking to reduce burdensome regulations and practices while maintaining an exemplary business environment.

QUALITY OF LIFE

MODERATOR
Jim Apperson

PANELISTS
Rep. Dean Cooley
Sen. Chris Cumiskey
R. George Dean
Sen. Randall Gnant
Margaret Dunn Hodge
Rep. Marilyn Jarrett
Rep. Jean McGrath
Marc Osborn
Sen. David Peterson

Sandra Rembrandt
Frank Rivera
George Russell
Fran Smith
Christine Gibbs Springer
Melissa Taylor
Rep. Christine Weason
Greg Workman
Nancy Wrona

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Arizona's escalating growth rate is clear evidence of its outstanding quality of life. There are, however, areas which would benefit by improvement.

As residents, small business owners have a deep concern for the well-being of our community. During the Quality of Life session, we will prioritize those concerns. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is not only a regulatory body, but also a partner in the progress of our state. In working together with ADEQ we can establish manageable policies which maintain the optimum balance of industry and environmental integrity.

ADEQ, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), and the Legislature will partner again this year to continue their efforts to improve air quality in Metro Phoenix. All three pollutants - particulates, carbon monoxide and ozone - will continue to be addressed in an ongoing effort to upgrade Maricopa County's air quality to federal Clean Air Act Standards.

Cleanup and leakage control of underground storage tanks present significant financial problems. The State Assurance Fund was created to assist with these costs. Systems are currently being researched to improve the manner in which claims are processed and financed, and to create reasonable oversight mechanisms.

Better systems for **transportation** are being investigated.. The State of Arizona's landscape is highly diverse. A few of its metropolitan areas, particularly the immense Phoenix metro area, suffer from excessive congestion in rush hour. Can this be eased utilizing the systems in progress or are alternatives required? A discussion of Arizona's options for traffic relief will explore how transportation issues affect small business.

The **crime factor** is a cause for worry, ranging from minor issues to violent crime. Although violent crime remains the greater concern as a whole, such issues as graffiti are becoming more and more difficult for the small business owner to deal with. Methods for prevention of this and other forms of vandalism will be explored.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

MODERATOR
Tom Gunn

PANELISTS

C. Diane Bishop
Jim Cox
Sen. Chris Cumiskey
Stan Grossman
Sen. John Huppenthal
Rep. Karen Johnson
Rep. Laura Knaperek
Art Othon

Sen. David Peterson
Patricia Ross
Richard Schulte
Rep. Barry Wong
Harold Wong, Ph.D.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The quality of our workforce is of prime concern to all of Arizona's small business owners. Those hiring new employees often find very few applicants who are appropriately skilled for even entry level positions. Is there anything the small business community can do to change this?

Workforce development has become the object of intense assessment and restructuring. The recently formed School-to-Work program has been made a division within the Arizona Department of Commerce, positioning it as an economic development activity. Through this office the classroom is linked with the ten areas, or *clusters*, targeted for integrated development by the Governor's Strategic Partnership for Economic Development (GSPED).

These clusters are:

- bioindustry
- environmental technology
- food, fiber and natural products
- high-tech industry
- minerals & mining
- optics
- senior living
- software
- tourism & experience
- transportation & distribution

School-to-Work enables future employees to see the abundance of careers available for both technically and academically oriented students. Participants in the program observe such subjects as algebra and physics being applied in the workplace, thereby encouraging a sound foundation in these and other basic studies. Thus, they are able to learn what is available and establish educational paths, technical or academic, that will result in real jobs.

Opportunities for the small business owner to take part in School-to-Work programs, such as shadowing, internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships, will be explored at this informative session.

In addition to work readiness issues, such vital topics as **health care** and **child care** will be discussed. We will examine employee benefits such as the latest in **workers' compensation**. Is a subtle shift of power on the horizon? Will the Industrial Commission have a greater voice in decisions presently made by the courts?

Hear the experts - voice your opinion - regarding **workforce issues**.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

These recommendations represent the concerns of those attending the individual breakout sessions. The findings have been prioritized according to the number of votes received at the end of each session. Only the top priorities have been listed.

The individual rankings in this list do not necessarily correspond to the rankings of the General Session, where voters may have assigned issues different priority rankings from those determined in the breakout sessions.

SESSION 1 TAXES

1. Corporate income taxes should be reduced.
2. Eliminate the business personal property tax.
3. Eliminate property tax as the funding source for education and identify another source.
4. Find solution to school district funding issue.
5. Retirement communities should pay school district taxes.
6. Make collection of taxes and penalties less arbitrary and onerous.

SESSION TWO REGULATORY REFORM

1. The state should conduct a small business equity study to include women, minorities and small business.
2. Reduce regulatory costs for small business and create a business-friendly compliance process with an assumption of innocence (procedural safeguards).
3. Equalize benefits and opportunities for small business as compared to those afforded large businesses.
4. Establish legislation to permit small businesses to have aggregation for determining utility rates.
5. Place states' rights before federal government mandates.

SESSION THREE QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Institute judicial reform to eliminate frivolous lawsuits.
2. Use the state surplus to develop freeways and transportation systems.
3. Establish public/private partnerships for transportation.
4. Enhance crime prevention efforts.
5. Establish a mechanism to ensure that subcontractors are paid at the same time contractors are paid by state agencies.

SESSION FOUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Consolidate the 28 different federal and state grants for “school to work” and job training into one master pool.
2. Provide funds to support alternative training opportunities such as co-ops, internships from grade school through community college.
3. Provide incentives directly to small businesses that provide job training opportunities.
4. Provide a directory of available public and private post secondary skill resources.
5. Improve literacy programs for kindergarten through third grade.

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GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are from the General Session. There was not any discussion of these topics at the General Session; the vote was for prioritization purposes only.

1. The state should conduct a small business equity study to include women, minorities and small business.
2. Institute judicial reform to eliminate frivolous lawsuits.
3. Corporate income taxes should be reduced.
4. Eliminate the business personal property tax.
5. Provide alternative training opportunities, such as co-ops and apprenticeships from K-3 through community colleges.
6. Establish a mechanism to ensure that subcontractors are paid when general contractors are paid by state agencies.
7. Reduce regulatory costs for small business and create a business-friendly compliance process with an assumption of innocence (procedural safeguards).
8. Use the state budget surplus to develop freeways and transportation systems.
9. Equalize benefits and opportunities for small business as compared to those afforded large businesses.
10. Establish public/private partnerships for public transportation.
11. Provide incentives directly to small businesses that provide job training programs.
12. Establish one locally controlled pool of federal and state funds for job training and consolidate the various programs.
13. Establish legislation to permit small businesses to have aggregation for determining utility rates.
14. Retirement communities should pay school district taxes.
15. Place states' rights before federal government's mandates.
16. Improve literacy programs for kindergarten through third grade.
17. Enhance crime prevention efforts.
18. Eliminate taxes for small businesses in the start-up years.

19. Create a mechanism for supporting and reviewing concerns of seniors, including employee background checks and minimum employment standards.
20. Include social values in school education.
21. Reduce complexity of regulatory language.
22. Provide incentives for telecommuting and establishing of at-home offices.
23. Eliminate property tax as the funding source for education and identify another source.
24. Find solution to school district funding issue.
25. Do very long-range planning with benchmarks and link public and private training programs to state-identified industry clusters.
26. Resolve conflicts among federal, state, county and city agencies.
27. Make collection of taxes and penalties less arbitrary and onerous.
28. Make all city sales taxes uniform.
29. Fund traffic controls and flow to reduce pollution and time.
30. Enhance residential planning and emphasize infill.
31. Centralize the collection of child-support payments.

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Arizona Small Business Advocate

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Fox & Fin Financial

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Americare Employers Group

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Jim Apperson
Maricopa Community Colleges

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7. Cellular One
8. CIGNA HealthCare
9. KFNN 1510 AM Financial Newsradio
10. MicroAge
11. The Business Journal
12. The Tribune
13. Today's Arizona Woman Success Magazine
14. US West
15. XEROX

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EXHIBITORS

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality	Citywide Cellular
Arizona Department of Revenue	CK Event Enterprises
Arizona Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.	Commercial Blueprint
Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	Computer One Training
Arizona Small Business Association	Crisis Preparation and Recovery
Arizona Small Business Development Center	CRM Computer Consulting
ASU FastTrac: Growing Your Small Business	Dean Witter
AzTech Recruitment Company	Disel USA
Bank of Arizona	Easel Photography, Inc.
Bank One	Educational Seminars of Scottsdale
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BLS Communications	Elan Travel
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