

# 068. THE UNITED STATE OF ARIZONA

As the Beatles said, "Come together, right now... over me."



BY RICK GIBSON

IS THERE STILL a "conflict" between Phoenix and Arizona's other cities? It appears to have diminished substantially over the past 10 years. Today, there are many cases of us Arizonans working together. The pettiness that existed in the mid-1990s is now, well, pretty petty.

To confirm my view, I solicited reactions from a cross-section of influencers in Arizona to find out what they thought. The conclusion is that the business leaders of Arizona *are* coming together. The players in Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and other cities are acting more melodiously, if not in complete concert.

However, there's one issue still remaining: Who is going to drive? Should people from Tucson and Flagstaff drive to meet in Phoenix, or the other way around? OK, there also still remains a healthy sports rivalry between UA and ASU, but that's no different than the competition between UCLA and USC.

Here are some opinions from a few of Arizona's movers and shakers:

#### UA Eller College of Business and Public Administration Dean

##### Mark Zupan, on rivalry:

"I think that too much of our historical mindset has been an 'us vs. them' approach: Tucson vs. Phoenix; town vs. gown; ASU vs. UA vs. NAU; promoting tourist/snowbird-based industries vs. an economy focused on export-based ventures; development vs. quality of life. This historical mindset has not served our state well. I see much more of a willingness to cooperate now to promote the common good than I did six years ago when my family and I first moved to Arizona."

#### Valley Ventures General Partner Larry Aldrich, on working together:

"[We need] to be a little more upbeat, to recognize successes, dwell less on failures and stop building people up by tearing others down. Unfortunately, we seem to attract people who rarely collaborate and prefer to compete. That's great for business growth at times, but often misses a bigger picture and opportunity."

"As more and more people move here from other parts of the country, **attitudes are starting to change.** There is more of a feeling of unity, like we're all in this together."

— Marilyn Teplitz, President, MGT Associates, LLC

#### MicroAge Founder and angel investor Alan P. Hald, on the leadership community:

"The phrase 'movers and shakers' is especially relevant to Arizona. Leadership continually moves in and out of the state for a variety of reasons. We have both a high influx and a high outflow of talent. It's a strength since newcomers with either positional power and/or the will to work in the civic sphere can quickly become part of our community's leadership. It's a major challenge since we tend to lose continuity with what has already been developed, leading to endless rehashing and re-invention. Fortunately, recognizing that both talent and technology drive the economy has become 'institutionalized' in a positive way in our mainstream economic development organizations."

#### Industry leader and advisor Joyce Haver, of The Rainmakers, on new leaders:

"I am very impressed with the direction Michael Crow, the new president of ASU, is taking to leverage the resources of our three state universities. This is a profound step forward in helping build a sustainable and globally correct environment and economy for Arizona."

#### The Miramar Group, Ltd., Managing Director D. Roy Serventi, on collective resources:

"Being a native of Arizona, having grown up in Tucson and now living in Scottsdale, I've always been aware of the divisiveness between the northern and southern sectors of the state. I've always felt that this state, if it were to pull its collective resources together (strong universities, business leaders and entrepreneurial spirit, and a government with a plan and vision), could be an example to the Western region of the U.S."

#### Leading Tucson CPA David J. Cohen, on distance:

"In my humble opinion, only the vast distances between cities and towns make it difficult to work together on a regular basis, especially when it is the Tucsonans who always must trek up to Phoenix; otherwise, we get along just fine."

#### Greenberg Traurig Attorney Quinn Williams, on rural vs. urban:

"The great challenge facing Arizona is the growing divide between rural and metro Arizona. The economies and issues facing these 'two' Arizonas are a very important division in our legislature. Gov. Napolitano has an economic agenda that can be good for all of Arizona, focusing on education and entrepreneurial growth in all parts of Arizona."

**Arizona Optics Industry Association Inc., Co-chairman Bob Breault, on payback:**

"The Optics Cluster highly values its Phoenix members (and those from other areas) because they support and participate in our initiatives, go to trade shows with us, and help us with statewide economic development. We need all our partners in the other regions to speak to their legislators on the key issues affecting all of us... so there is payback in all directions."

**MGT Associates, LLC President Marilyn Teplitz, on unity:**

"As more and more people move here from other parts of the country, attitudes are starting to change. There is more of a feeling of unity, like we're all in this together."

**Arizona Technology Council President Todd A. Bankofier, on the tech community:**

"I have a vision of a much stronger technology community in Arizona based in collaboration and unification. Simply, this equates to all regions and sectors of Arizona putting on the same colored uniforms as we engage competition in the global economy."

**Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce VP of Entrepreneurial Services Terree Wasley, on partnerships:**

"The Arizona Venture Capital Conference has always partnered with people and organizations throughout Arizona, and is a great example of how the state can work together on programs that have positive economic outcomes. These partnerships include several in Tucson, with the venture capital and investment firms located there, as well as a long-standing partnership with Pima Community College and the Small Business Development Center. We also have partnerships that have developed more recently with organizations in Flagstaff."

**Northern Arizona Technology & Business Incubator (NATBI) President Richard Baron, on goals:**

"For Arizona to achieve economic development goals, partnerships are invaluable. At NATBI we enjoy a strong partnership with NAU to help commercialize technology and promote student entrepreneurship. With regards to capital formation, our local Forest Angels Investment Network has successfully partnered with the Arizona Angels in Phoenix to fund capital into new startups. Finally, the Arizona Department of Commerce is a very strong ally, helping us to achieve job growth goals and new business formation." 

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