

# Fiscal '15 budget full of good news for Surprise



Over the next 12 months, enhancements will be made to many of our city services and amenities as a result of Surprise's new fiscal 2015 budget,

which went into effect on July 1.

Unlike in recent years when we had to make difficult cuts to the city's annual budget, I'm really looking forward to working with my colleagues on the council as well as with new City Manager Bob Wingenroth on new projects that will benefit citizens throughout our community.

Some of the highlights of the budget are:

» New Saturday service and additional daily trips to the Surprise Dial-a-Ride service.

» New amenities at Surprise Farms and Veramonte parks.

» New sidewalks on Bell Road, from the park-and-ride facility to 114th Avenue.



**Surprise's Dial-a-Ride service will be expanding as a result of the city's fiscal 2015 budget.** THE REPUBLIC

» New community festival that will celebrate our city's heritage.

» New competitive soccer, basketball and volleyball leagues, as well as a summer camp, for youths.

In addition, we are investing millions of dollars in Surprise's infrastructure — the bricks and mortar of our city — that is critical to our residents' quality of life

each and every day. Some of the essential projects being funded in this year's budget include:

» Maintaining and expanding the city's water and sewer systems.

» Maintaining 70 (lane) miles of streets through the city's pavement preservation program.

» Improving segments of roadways along El Mirage Road, Peoria Avenue and Mountain View Boulevard.

» Constructing new flood-control and drainage facilities.

» Enhancing the appearance on some of our major streets with new medians and beautification of rights of way (streets will be further enhanced with additional funds planned for next year's FY16 budget).

This year's annual budget is testament to the fact that our city has turned around financially in a very short time. In just two years, we have turned a \$500,000 general-fund balance into a much healthier \$29 million general-fund

balance and restored our two-month operating reserve. The best news of all is we accomplished this without a tax increase.

The result is Surprise is in a much more stable financial position today than it has been in years. But, as we all know from our own personal finances as well as the delicate national economy, it is critical that our city continues to live within its means.

The council and I truly understand that and take very seriously the responsibility you have placed in us to be stewards of Surprise's budget. To that end, we will continue to espouse a conservative financial policy for our city as we have over the past several years to help ensure Surprise continues to have a solid fiscal path moving forward. Without a doubt, this is our greatest responsibility as your elected representatives.

*Sharon Wolcott is mayor of Surprise.*