



For Immediate Release

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**“ARIZONA’S ECONOMY THE FOCUS OF
105TH ARIZONA TOWN HALL**

***Getting the Jobs We Want, Taking Advantage of the Global Economy and Strengthening Local Economies
Across the State to be discussed at November’s Gathering***

(October 22, 2014, ARIZONA) -Arizona has lagged behind other states in the most recent economic recovery. Only 60 percent of the jobs lost during the recession have returned when Arizona typically leads the national average in growth. What is the best path forward that builds from Arizona's strengths and unique assets?

These questions and many others will be discussed at the **105th Arizona Town Hall on "Arizona's Economy,"** set for November 2-5, 2014 at the Grand Canyon. Approximately 100 Arizona leaders from across the state will actively engage in panel discussions about how to use Arizona's unique strengths to support a thriving economy for all of Arizona's diverse communities.

The timing for the topic as the state is staring down significant budget issues, coupled with a statewide election that will place new leaders in every top level elected position, will certainly be part of the important dialogue. Participants will be armed with a comprehensive background report on the Economy to help frame their recommendations for state and local leaders.

Report excerpts:

- The state's performance on measures of productivity and prosperity has been below average for decades.
- On a per capita basis, economic activity is lower in Arizona than the national average, contributing to the state's low average incomes and relatively high poverty rates.
- Arizona can leverage its unique geography and assets to increase the resiliency of the economy while improving its overall strength.
- Arizona is positioned to take advantage of trade opportunities between California, the world's eighth largest economy, and Mexico.
- Arizona's infrastructure - particularly the transportation system - has not kept pace with the state's growth over the last 25 years.
- Improving educational attainment is imperative to the state's future economic success.
- As Arizona reshapes its economy with the development of such cutting-edge sectors as bioscience, renewable energy and advanced electronics to become more diversified and globally competitive, a new identity is emerging for the state.

Two keynote speakers will add to the full days of facilitated conversations. Meal presentations are open to the public, subject to availability. The first day's luncheon on Monday, November 3rd will feature **Dr. James A. Crupi**, President and founder of Strategic Leadership Solutions. Crupi will speak on *"How Arizona Can Capitalize on Global Economic Trends."* As a recognized authority in international business, future trends and leadership development, Crupi has worked with many Fortune 1000 corporations including Coca-Cola, Turner Broadcasting Corporation, AT&T, HP, Intel and others. He's been featured on CNN, FOX Business, National Public Radio and in publications throughout the world. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, completed advanced work at the London Business School, Oxford University and the International Management Institute in Geneva.

Monday's dinner presentation will be made by [Mary Murphy](#), an officer at The Pew Charitable Trusts. She serves as the principal analyst on Pew's state and local fiscal health initiatives. Her presentation titled *"Mapping Arizona's Future: Possibilities, Realities and Risks"* will focus on how Arizona can apply best practices from other states to strengthen its economy.

Murphy conducts in-depth research on state budget policies, local government finances and other relevant economic issues such as debt affordability. She works directly with state and local budget leaders providing customized research and technical assistance to develop and adopt solutions that can best support a state towards improved long-term fiscal health.

She also leads Pew's research and analysis on the fiscal conditions in 30 key American cities-examining the recent performance of local government finances and how these significant cities weathered the effects of the Great Recession. Murphy has been a lead researcher on a number of studies examining and assessing how states manage revenue and economic volatility, an evaluation of budget stabilization policies, and building an "early warning system" to detect local fiscal distress. Her work has also been widely cited by major news media including, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Bond Buyer*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and other regional press outlets.

Town Hall leadership will share the [background report](#) along with the recommendations with the newly elected leaders to showcase how a cross-section of Arizonans believe the state can and should move forward.

The background report was prepared by Arizona State University to shape the three-day discourse. The Morrison Institute for Public Policy also supported its development and contributing authors included Chamber of Commerce and economic development leaders.

Already student leaders from across Arizona gathered for the Future Leader's Town Hall and developed findings and recommendations for the larger gathering to consider. They include:

- Higher paying jobs are essential for the health of Arizona's economy;
- Education is essential for a healthy economy. This includes making college tuition affordable and ensuring students are prepared for college and the workforce;
- Arizona has many natural resources that are essential to Arizona's economic future, such as water and solar power. These resources need to be utilized and protected;
- Tourism plays a vital role in Arizona's economy. Arizona should continue to capitalize on its natural beauty and climate to attract tourists;
- Local business growth is extremely important to Arizona's economy and is the key to having more higher-paying jobs. Arizonans should support local businesses;
- Arizona's proximity to Mexico is both a strength and a weakness in Arizona's economy. Tourism from Mexico should be encouraged.

This 105th Town Hall is made possible by the generous support of **APS, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, SRP, the Arizona Commerce Authority, Arizona Lottery, Cox Charities, Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation, DMB, Jennings Strouss, Wells Fargo** and the **Greater Phoenix Economic Council**.

Who: Arizonans from across the state. Participation in a Town Hall is made through nomination process by Town Hall board members and past participants.

What: Town Hall on Arizona's Economy

Where: El Tovar Hotel - South Rim of the Grand Canyon

When: November 2-5, 2014

Note: Phone interviews with the two guest speakers can be arranged. Interviews with participants from almost any area of the state can also be arranged to offer insights and reflections on the recommendations the collective group develops.

About the Arizona Town Hall

Arizona Town Hall is a private, statewide nonprofit organization that has been a catalyst for civic action and the advancement of issues important to Arizonans for more than 50 years. The organization's signature events include large, statewide Town Halls held in the spring and fall, convening diverse Arizonans together using civil discourse to develop solutions to the state's most pressing issues. Multiple smaller Community Outreach Programs head across the state for months following each main gathering add diverse perspectives to the solutions each Town Hall develops. The organization also works with government and business entities interested in using the Town Hall system of civil discourse and consensus dialogue to find common ground and bring solutions to challenges they may be facing.

The Arizona Town Hall is made possible through the generous financial support of individuals, businesses, foundations and other organizations that support its mission. Additional information regarding Arizona Town Hall can be found online at <http://www.aztownhall.org>.

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