

For Immediate Release

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Tucson Metro Chamber, business community and job seekers demand answers from Pima County regarding Rosemont Copper

Rosemont Copper has undergone a five-year study and review by nearly every level of government led by the U.S. Forest Service. The Tucson Metro Chamber has reviewed the Rosemont plans and determined it would be a good thing for the people of Pima County – a 21st century mine with 2,000 jobs and a lot of local spending and tax revenue. Those are numbers we cannot ignore.

Needless to say, the Tucson Metro Chamber (and many other groups and citizens) were disappointed again by Pima County's recent actions to stall the development of the mine. In a recent edition of *Inside Tucson Business*, Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry was quoted as saying, "To elevate our (the County's) role as one to stop this project is grandiose."

If Mr. Huckelberry dismisses his role and the county's role as being one of leadership, then what is his role?

Common sense says there are only three roles our county can play: lead, follow or get out of the way.

The U.S. Forest Service has the ultimate decision making authority in approving the manner of operation for Rosemont. And so it would seem that the Forest Service owns the leadership role. By process of elimination, the two choices remaining for Pima County are "following" or "getting out of the way".

"Following" would infer that the role of Pima County's Air Quality Control District (AQCD) of the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) is to comply with the prescribed process by doing its air quality permitting according to the schedule required by the application process. But Pima County appears unable to follow the rules. The County has missed the deadline specified in the federal program.

It's kind of like the kid who just can't seem to turn in his homework on time. However, in this case, the penalty isn't being sent to the principal's office, but rather answering lawsuits filed by Rosemont to force the County to follow the rules. According to *Inside Tucson Business*, hiring "outside consultants" to check on Rosemont (a role that is being performed by the Forest Service and any number of other governmental agencies) has now drained more than \$70,000 from the taxpayer's pocket. So the County clearly isn't "following". And instead of following its own rules, AQCD decided to make up its own new rules and denied the permit.

That leaves just “getting out of the way”.

With all due respect, we kindly ask that Pima County get out of the way. You aren’t leading. You aren’t following. You’re being an obstructionist. Your demands for mitigation are unreasonable. You are asking Rosemont to do something not called for by the Forest Service and something no other mining company has ever done (fill in the open pit).

Pima County will be paid millions in tax revenues by Rosemont (\$3.5 million a year in property taxes and a \$110 million one-time construction sales tax). Perhaps the County has a different number in mind, but the millions it will receive can make a real difference in our community now.

The Rosemont Mine application has demonstrated environmental sensitivity beyond anything called for in U.S. Forest Service regulations. Once in operation, it will have to comply with the strictest mining regulations in the world. Rosemont’s mining and mitigation processes rely on 21st century technologies including the use of solar energy and revegetation techniques recommended by the University of Arizona. The estimated economic impact on Pima County over the 20-year life expectancy of the mine is north of \$9 billion. Perhaps most importantly, 465 badly needed direct jobs and 1,600 indirect jobs are stalled as Pima County continues to obstruct the application process. This does not include the 1,500 construction jobs required over a two year period to build the facility.

You say you aren’t leading, Mr. Huckelberry, and it is now clear that the County’s PDEQ obviously hasn’t been following instructions or meeting deadlines under the supervision of the Board of Supervisors. Yet, it appears you are not “getting out of the way”, either.

It’s time for Pima County to think about the citizens it is supposed to represent. Lead. Follow. Get out of the way. For the sake of the families who need the paychecks, the Pima County coffers that need the revenue and a community that is weary of government agencies stifling economic vitality, we ask that Administrator Huckelberry, Chairman Valadez and Supervisors Bronson, Day, Carroll and Elias reconsider their obstruction and expedite the Rosemont approval process.

About The Tucson Metro Chamber

The mission of the Tucson Metro Chamber is to promote a strong local economy. The Tucson Metro Chamber is a membership-based business advocacy and networking organization that represents more than 1,350 businesses, employing more than 105,000 employees in the greater Tucson area. Small business makes up approximately 85 percent of Chamber membership, which mirrors the overall Tucson area business community.