



*A research and advocacy association, supporting efficient, responsive county government in Arizona.*

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## Happy Fourth of July!



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## Arizona Continues to Fight Wildfires

Fire season is in full force in the western part of the United States, with Arizona facing a number of number of fires within our borders. In response to increased wildfire activity around Arizona, last Friday, Governor Doug Ducey declared a state of emergency and directed additional resources be made available for the state's wildfire suppression efforts. Since April 2017, Arizona has experienced more than one dozen large wildfires, aided by high temperatures, winds, and available fuels. To read the emergency declaration, please [click here](#).

For a list of all wildfires burning in Arizona, please [click here](#).

Yesterday, Governor Doug Ducey declared a State of Emergency in Yavapai County in response to the [Goodwin Fire](#). As of yesterday, the fire has burned more than 20,600 acres, forcing evacuations and the closure of portions of State Route 69. For more information on the Emergency Declaration, please [click here](#).

For additional information on fires burning in other parts of the state, please [click here](#).

*Sources:* [WildlandFire.az.gov](#); [AZGovernor.gov](#)

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## PSPRS Committee Meets in Coconino County

On Wednesday, the Legislative Ad Hoc Study Committee on the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) met in Coconino County at the Coconino Community College to hear from Mary Beth Hrin who gave a presentation titled *A Taxpayer's Perspective on PSPRS*.



Committee members in attendance included, the Chair of the Committee, Representative Noel Campbell, the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Representative David Stringer, Representative Charlene Fernandez, Representative David Livingston, Representative Athena Salman and Representative Bob Thorpe.

The purpose of the committee is to study an overview of PSPRS and a historical overview of employer contributions over the last 20 years; the impact of various actuarial and investment assumptions by the PSPRS board and other regulating entities, as well as other statutory provisions enacted in state law; the result of recently enacted PSPRS reforms and other legislative changes; the impact to cities, towns, and fire districts across the state due to increasing pension contributions rates; and the concerns and proposals of stakeholder organizations and taxpayers.

The Ad Hoc committee will hold future meetings in Yuma, Bisbee and other locations throughout the state.

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## This Week in Arizona History

Prior to achieving statehood, Arizona was well known for its “Wild Wild West” reputation and notorious lack of security at county jails, prompting on the Eighth Arizona Territorial Legislature to propose a bill calling for the establishment of a penitentiary. In 1875, the proposal was adopted, and construction quickly began. Located next to the Colorado River, on a hill donated by the village of Yuma, the Yuma Territorial Prison was established and on July 1, 1876, seven convicts were led up Prison Hill and placed in cells they had helped to build.

The prison was known to locals as the “country club on the Colorado River” due to the various amenities offered such as electricity, a modern hospital, a library, and even music and foreign language classes for the prisoners. Those residing in the penitentiary most likely felt differently. Once locked up in the evenings, the inmates were situated 6 to a cell with a bucket for a toilet, were only allowed to bathe once a week, and if they broke the rules, were under threat of being thrown into the “dark cell”: an excavated hole in the hillside, containing a metal cage placed in the middle of it, with a small vent for air and food and water.

Over the 33 years it was open, more than 3,000 criminals and general ne'er-do-wells crossed the threshold of this infamous prison, including men and women of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. Crimes ranged from murder, theft, embezzlement, polygamy, to even a case of “seduction under the promise of marriage.” There were many notable prisoners who spent time at the Yuma Territorial Prison, including Pearl Hart who had participated in the last ever stage coach robbing that occurred in Arizona, and “Buckskin” Frank Leslie who, at one point, worked for Wyatt Earp in Tombstone.

The prison was finally closed in 1909 due to inhumane conditions and overcrowding. Since its closure, the prison has served as a high school, a shelter for the homeless during the depression, a movie location, and now as a historical landmark and museum.

If you would like more information, or would like to plan a visit to this historical house of detention, you can check out the official museum website [here](#).



(L-R: Pearl Hart; Yuma Prison Cell Blocks; Yuma Prison Guard Tower)

**Sources:** [Yuma Prison](#); [PBS Arizona Stories](#); [Arizona Memory Project](#)

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## NACo Webinar: Stepping Up

On July 6, 2017 from 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm, the National Association of Counties (NACo) is hosting a webinar titled: *Stepping Up Network Call: Conducting a Comprehensive Process Analysis and Inventory of Services for People with Mental Illnesses in Jails*. During the call, counties will engage in a facilitated discussion on the fourth question of the “Six Questions” document: Have We Conducted a Comprehensive Process Analysis and Inventory of Services?

Counties are encouraged to sign on and join the conversation with national experts and county practitioners!

Please be sure to participate in or review the [June 29 webinar](#) on “Conducting a Comprehensive Process Analysis and Inventory of Services” prior to joining the call.

To register for the webinar, please [click here](#).

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