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People come together for community clean up on key regional corridor to improve 'first impression'

More than 120 volunteers assembled today to clean up litter along a five-mile stretch on one of the region's key corridors during a "Showcasing our Beauty" event coordinated by Pima Association of Governments, Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, Southern Arizona Leadership Council and Tucson Clean & Beautiful.

"The tremendous volunteer turn out shows that there is interest in helping to make our corridors beautiful," said PAG Regional Council Chair and Marana Mayor Ed Honea. "We anticipate that today's effort is the first of many events to raise awareness of the need for all of us to keep our region looking great and to leave a positive first impression with our visitors."

The clean up took place along Tucson Boulevard, Benson Highway and Kino Parkway, between Tucson International Airport and 22nd, the key corridor to downtown Tucson.

TREO President and CEO Joe Snell, who approached the PAG Regional Council to lead this effort, said that beautiful corridors do make a difference when TREO is trying to make that good first impression on potential business prospects visiting the region.

"Not only is it important that we have a trash-free environment but it is also important that we have beautiful landscaping and improved

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signage,” Snell said. “Business prospects are comparing Tucson and the region to our competitors and we want to make sure that we stand out in as many ways as possible, including how we look to the outside world.”

Today’s event involved several jurisdictions and a variety of organizations including Pima County, the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, the town of Marana, Sun Tran, the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Tucson Chamber of Commerce and the University of Arizona. Future efforts will focus on Interstate 10 and other major gateways into the community.

One of the goals of the regional clean up is to inspire other businesses and partnering organizations to sign up and adopt a one-mile segment for volunteer clean up.

“PAG employees have volunteered on a one-mile clean up along Grant Road for over a year and we are very supportive of this effort to further enhance the appearance of our community,” said Gary Hayes, executive director of PAG. “We encourage others to step forward and take on the same role. It’s a good way to know your co-workers as well as to explore different areas of the region along our key corridors.”

Tucson Clean & Beautiful, a nonprofit community-based organization, runs the Adopt-a-Street program. For more information about adopting a corridor for clean up, please visit call (520) 791-3109 or visit www.tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org.

“The success of the Regional Transportation Authority’s \$2.1 billion transportation plan and TREO’s economic blueprint are models of what we anticipate will happen with this initiative,” said Peter Likins, chairman of the Tucson Regional Town Hall and chair of SALC. “We are a growing region and that growth can lead to a number of issues if we do not take steps now to anticipate our future needs. Future issues dealing with water, land use, health and education will be addressed. In the short term, we want to focus on a regional issue for which we can make a difference now.

“Let’s take pride in how we look and be committed to showcasing our beauty, not only to our visitors but also to ourselves,” Likins said. “Let’s be proud of the place we call home and make a good first impression.”

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Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, air quality and water quality.