

MEDA Annual Progress Report FY 2020-2021:

A Year of Great Momentum



MEDA

Maricopa Economic
Development Alliance

JOINT LETTER FROM MEDA CHAIRMAN/CEO AND MARICOPA MAYOR

Greetings Maricopa Citizens and Partners,

The indomitable spirit of community service and partnership that is the core of Maricopa's DNA has never been more manifest as we continue to navigate the ongoing effects of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and its variants.

In this past most extraordinary year, Maricopans have risen to the occasion, showing the deeply embedded caring that we all have for one another as neighbors, friends and fellow citizens. We all take enormous pride in our city – a special community that offers an unparalleled, outstanding and safe quality of life; a vibrant spirit of community service, and strong public-private partnerships in which citizens, business, government and education work together to build a strong and diverse local economy and community.

The Maricopa Economic Development Alliance (MEDA) is a model for this spirit of partnership and is a critically important cornerstone to our economic vitality and sustainability. Through MEDA, Maricopa City Government and business and education leaders join forces to market and promote the city as a business location and generate promising economic development opportunities. In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, MEDA continued to morph into a dynamic economic development force in helping to build the Maricopa economy. Also, in February of this year, we were very pleased to welcome Adam D. Saks as MEDA's Executive Director.

People and companies seeking a community where business, government, education and citizens genuinely care for and value each other, and where exceptional prospects for growth thrive, are finding that the City of Maricopa, Arizona is such a place.

We are very proud of our community and have the utmost confidence that we will continue to grow and thrive, as will the people and businesses that have made Maricopa their home. Thank you for your commitment to and investment in one of the most special cities on Planet Earth.



John D. Schurz
MEDA Chairman/CEO



Christian Price
Mayor, City of Maricopa

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WHO WE ARE

The Maricopa Economic Development Alliance (MEDA) is a 501(c)3 corporation established in 2009 to assist in fostering economic growth and prosperity in Maricopa.

Since its inception, MEDA has brought together the business, government, education and civic sectors to identify and advance policies that facilitate business investment, growth and workforce development.

MEDA's Board of Directors is comprised of senior Maricopa business and education executives. Equally important is the actively engaged representation of Maricopa's Mayor, Councilmembers and City Manager.

During FY 2020-21, MEDA fully morphed into its "2.0" stage, which elevated the organization into a greatly expanded role. MEDA continues to serve as Maricopa's external marketing organization for economic development as well as the city's trusted partner for providing confidential services to assist relocating and expanding firms.

MEDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHAIRMAN & CEO
Mr. John D. Schurz
President & General Manager
Orbitel Communications, LLC



BOARD SECRETARY
Mr. James F. Kenny
President
El Dorado Holdings, Inc.



BOARD TREASURER
Mr. Ron L. Fleming
Chairman, President & CEO
Global Water Resources



DIRECTOR
Mr. Michael Adams
Group President
Great Western Bank



DIRECTOR
Mr. Malcolm Green
Director
Maricopa Agricultural Center



DIRECTOR
Mr. Rick Horst
City Manager
City of Maricopa



DIRECTOR
Dr. Tracey Lopeman
Superintendent
Maricopa Unified School District
#20



DIRECTOR
Ms. Bea Lueck
 General Manager & Managing Editor ROX Media Group



DIRECTOR
The Honorable Robert Miguel
 Chairman
 Ak-Chin Indian Community



DIRECTOR
Mr. Jason Plotke
 Co-Founder & President
 Private Motorsports Group



DIRECTOR
The Honorable Christian Price
 Mayor
 City of Maricopa



DIRECTOR
The Honorable Nancy Smith
 Vice Mayor
 City of Maricopa



DIRECTOR
The Honorable Henry M. Wade
 Councilmember
 City of Maricopa



DIRECTOR
Mr. Eric Wilkey
 President
 Arizona Grain, Inc.



DIRECTOR
Mr. Daniel Wolf
 District Manager/Division Operations
 Southwest Gas Corporation



DIRECTOR
Mr. Brian Yerges
 General Manager
 Electrical District No. 3



ADVISORY DIRECTOR
Mr. Andy Kroese
 Vice President & CFO
 Arizona Grain, Inc.



SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE BOARD
Dr. Ioanna T. Morfessis
 President & Chief Strategist
 IO.INC



SPECIAL COUNSEL TO THE BOARD
Mr. Bradley R. Pollock
 Phoenix Associate
 Snell & Wilmer

MEDA STAFF



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 Mr. Adam D. Saks

Adam Saks was appointed as MEDA's first Executive Director in February 2021. In this capacity, Mr. Saks is responsible for managing MEDA's operations as well as business development and lead generation activities.

Mr. Saks is a well-known business and community leader in Maricopa. Most recently, he established and built 170,000 sq ft of Entertainment in the first UltraStar Multi-tainment Center in the U.S., which was in partnership with the Ak-Chin Indian Community. In his eight years at the helm of this enterprise, Mr. Saks helped to build a new category of destination entertainment in Arizona.

His business and civic leadership includes Board Treasurer of the Maricopa Community Foundation; former Chair of the Maricopa Chamber of Commerce; Chair, Chairman of Pinal Regional Council First Things First and former Board member of Playworks Arizona. Mr. Saks also previously served as a Board member of the Maricopa Economic Development Alliance.

Mr. Saks also currently is CEO of two companies: The Dynamic Entertainment Group and UltraStar Multi-tainment. He graduated Cum Laude from Johnson & Wales University with degrees in Culinary Arts/Hospitality Management.

WHAT WE DO

MEDA champions strategies and solutions that foster economic growth and prosperity in the City of Maricopa.

As MEDA morphed from its historic advisory and marketing roles into its new, substantially expanded economic development role on behalf of the City of Maricopa, its goals were also broadened. These goals are aligned with City and Board approved strategies.

GOAL 1: GENERATE BUSINESS LEADS AND PROSPECTS FOR MARICOPA

Serve as the single point of contact and information source about Maricopa's business locations advantages to firms interested in investing and/or establishing quality job producing operations in Maricopa.

GOAL 2: PROMOTE AND MARKET MARICOPA AS A PRIME BUSINESS LOCATION

Execute marketing, business attraction and retention initiatives to generate opportunities for private capital investment and job creation in Maricopa.

GOAL 3: PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE CITY ON KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Identify barriers to Maricopa's economic development competitiveness and support public programs, policies and investments to strengthen Maricopa's business climate and quality of life.

GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN AND ADVANCE THE MEDA ORGANIZATION

Build a high-performing economic development organization in close collaboration with City Government to ensure that the organization is fulfilling its mission and realizing its goals.

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN FY 2020-21

GOAL 1: GENERATE BUSINESS LEADS AND PROSPECTS FOR MARICOPA

- **Evaluating and Responding to Partner-Generated Prospects:** MEDA worked closely with the City of Maricopa to review 91 prospects generated by the Arizona Commerce Authority, Greater Phoenix Economic Council and Pinal County Economic and Workforce Development Department in FY 2020-21. Combined, these prospects represented 29,000 potential new private sector jobs and capital investment of more than \$4 billion. MEDA prepared and submitted proposals for 33 of these prospect referrals, which represented firms whose evaluation and location criteria for which Maricopa is well-suited. MEDA also responded to a request from the City of Maricopa to work with a company that was evaluating the city as a possible business location, and that project continues to evolve as of the completion of the fiscal year.

SNAPSHOT OF REGIONAL/STATE PROSPECT ACTIVITY



- **Creating a Deal-Generating Pipeline for Maricopa:** In the intensely competitive global arena of economic development, countries and communities across the world are pursuing mainstay and emerging companies to convince them that their location is the absolute best for their expanding and new job-generating facilities.

Initiated in FY 2019-20, central to MEDA's deal-generating strategy has been the development of one-on-one relationships with corporate real estate executives, site location consultants and those who influence the business locations decision-making process for companies. MEDA also has been a member of national and international organizations whose membership encompass these executives and influencers. In FY 2020-21, MEDA's staff engaged in national and regional conferences with the following:

- Site Selectors Guild
- National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP)
- CORENET, The Global Association for Corporate Real Estate
- Urban Land Institute

In addition, MEDA planned and executed four business development missions in FY 2020-21 – the first such missions for the City of Maricopa: two to Southern California personally engaging with 11 site location consultants; one to the Southeast U.S. engaging with nine site location consultants, and one in New York City, engaging with two site location consultants.

SNAPSHOT OF MEDA BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OUTREACH FY 2020-21



• **Building A First-Rate Prospect Toolkit:** The best cities for business and the highest performing economic development organizations have amassed a wealth of prospect development and marketing tools. These tools enable economic development organizations to both introduce the community to decision-makers and site location consultants as well as respond to their inquiries. During FY 2020-21, MEDA continued to update research and produce a premier prospect collateral “toolkit” to provide a rapid top-line response to requests from site location consultants and companies seeking new locations.

**THE MARICOPA ADVANTAGE
WHY MARICOPA, AZ?**

Formerly recognized as one of the most desirable places to live in the United States, Maricopa is a beautiful, diverse community. Here the quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony. The quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony. The quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony.

MARICOPANS

Maricopa is a community that values and truly gives its citizens the highest quality of life. It is a community that values and truly gives its citizens the highest quality of life. It is a community that values and truly gives its citizens the highest quality of life.

**MARKET ACCESS & LOCATION
WELCOME TO MARICOPA, ARIZONA!**

Just 45 minutes from Downtown Phoenix, Maricopa is strategically located in the center of one of the most dynamic and growing markets in the United States. The quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony. The quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony.

STRATEGIC LOCATION

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**QUALITY OF LIFE & LIVABILITY
MARICOPA IS A DREAM COME TRUE**

In 2020, the number of Maricopa residents who moved to Maricopa increased by 15%. The quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony. The quality of life and the quality of the business environment are in perfect harmony.

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**TALENT & WORKFORCE
MARICOPANS**

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**EDUCATION
ABOUT EDUCATION IN MARICOPA, ARIZONA**

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EDUCATION

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GOAL 2: PROMOTE AND MARKET MARICOPA AS A PRIME BUSINESS LOCATION

MEDA’s marketing programs are designed to communicate the many distinctive advantages of a Maricopa business address. During FY 2020-21, MEDA developed and deployed more than 40 marketing products.

MEDA’s Marketing Platforms:

MEDA utilizes a variety of proven methods and tools to promote Maricopa in the competitive world of economic development and business decision making. A top-line summary of MEDA’s achievements in this mission critical function follows; these methods and tools include:

- MEDA Website – Maricopa’s Portal to the Economic Development World
- MEDA LinkedIn
- Digital Advertising



MEDA unveiled a new 360° fully immersive video introduction to the City of Maricopa, offering an in-depth look at Maricopa’s many assets from an economic development perspective. The 360° virtual tour offers site selectors and business relocation specialists a unique opportunity to virtually visit the City of Maricopa, from the comfort of their home or office, and receive a first-hand look at Maricopa’s unique value proposition. This 360° tour is available on Oculus Quest 2 headsets, which MEDA is making available to this targeted audience so that they can fully experience all that Maricopa has to offer as they evaluate the city for business prospects.

- Mainstream Economic Development Advertising
- Communications and Public Relations

Innovating and Blazing New Trails

Throughout all of FY 2020-21, MEDA ran a consistent, continuous digital ad campaign to drive LinkedIn members to MEDA’s company page on LinkedIn, as well as generate direct traffic and clicks through to MEDA’s website. The campaign targeted LinkedIn members in specific target markets domestically and internationally. Over the course of the full fiscal year, the LinkedIn digital ad campaign generated more than 4.3M impressions, initiated 1,670 clicks to MEDA’s website, and added more than 600 new LinkedIn followers.

MEDA’s website, since it’s comprehensive refresh and relaunch in FY 2019-20, has served as the primary public-facing marketing tool for the organization. Over the course of FY 2020-21, the MEDA website

received 41,093 web page views, maintained an average bounce rate of 5.30%, visitors spent an average of 1 minute 33 seconds on the website while also visiting an average of 3.28 web pages per visit, 10,200 unique visitors arrived at the website with 1,147 visitors returning more than once, and mobile devices continued to be the largest form of device used to visit the website.

MEDA placed several print advertisements during FY 2020-21 in regional and national publications to continue elevating the region and to make the strong case for business attraction. Print advertisements were placed in the following publications:

- Expansion Solutions, July/August 2020, full-page advertisement and advertorial
- Expansion Solutions, September/October 2020, full-page advertisement and advertorial
- Business Facilities, September/October 2020, full-page advertisement and advertorial
- Golden Corridor LIVING Magazine, Fall 2020, two-page spread

Key Marketing Tools and Guideposts

In addition to the broad but focused range of critical marketing and messaging tools, MEDA’s Marketing Team also created:

- MEDA Brand Manual – MEDA developed a framework for branding guidelines after significant investment in reviewing all of the organization’s tools and publications. A comprehensive manual was produced and will serve as MEDA’s guidepost for all marketing and communications platforms, e.g., digital, traditional and innovative.
- MEDA Best Practices – In addition to the branding guidelines, MEDA’s Marketing Team developed and further refined marketing best practices that drive the formulation of all MEDA tools, publications and platforms. This work entailed research into such best practices across business and industry, as well as a deep dive into the 10 best economic development

websites and 10 best cities for business. These best practices are designed to provide continuity, adherence to MEDA’s brand as well as improve efficiency in the development of various tools into which different MEDA Team members directly provide data and other inputs. The MEDA Best Practice materials are updated on an ongoing basis to ensure continuity, excellence and efficiency.

- MEDA Marketing Plan for FY 2021-22
- Key Economic Sector Briefs



GOAL 3: PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE CITY ON KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

One of MEDA’s critical roles is to provide expert assistance to the City of Maricopa on issues and initiatives that will help the community become even more competitive for private capital investment and job creation. There are several such initiatives in which MEDA works closely with Maricopa City Manager Rick Horst and key staff.

- **Infrastructure – Riggs Road/SR 347 Overpass:** With Maricopa Mayor Christian Price sounding the clarion call for support, the MEDA organization and Board members prepared and submitted letters advocating the funding of a SR347 overpass at Riggs Road. The funding for this critical piece of infrastructure was approved by the Arizona State Legislature and included in the Governor’s budget that became effective on July 1, 2021.
- **Shovel-Ready Sites:** Site development is mission critical for Maricopa’s economic development competitiveness. During this fiscal year, MEDA worked with the City of Maricopa and private brokerage community to plan for a 1,000-acre Maricopa Business and Technology Park. In addition, as a part of this initiative as well as in response to prospect requests, MEDA worked with the executives of the utilities in Maricopa – all of whom serve on the MEDA Board of Directors – to pinpoint specific current and planned capacity for electric, natural gas, water and broadband services to this and other potential employment sites in the city.
- **State of the City:** As the City of Maricopa’s fiscal agent and marketing partner for its annual State of the City event, MEDA worked closely with the City to market and promote the event, which had more than 300 in attendance, in addition to those viewing the event via streaming online to participate. The theme of the 2020 State of the City was “Maricopa’s Looking UP”, where Mayor Christian Price brought his quintessential energy and enthusiasm to celebrating the city’s many victories, progress and growth over the past year.
- **Water:** MEDA continued to monitor media and government reports about the status and outlook of water availability in the State of Arizona and Pinal County. While these critical issues do not immediately affect Maricopa since the city has an assured water supply, the fact is that national and international news coverage of the prolonged drought in the Western U.S. can and will influence the location decision-making of companies seeking to establish a presence

in Arizona and in particular, the City of Maricopa. MEDA's Board maintained its consistent focus on the availability of water in Pinal County, the city and State of Arizona. MEDA Board member, Mr. Ron Fleming, Chairman, President and CEO of Global Water Resources and a nationally recognized expert on water issues, continued to keep MEDA apprised of these critically important water-related issues.

- **Planning Grant:** The MEDA organization as well as many MEDA Board members wrote and submitted letters to a federal agency in support of a planning grant for a potential development site and project. A planning grant in the amount of \$400,000 was awarded.

GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN AND ADVANCE THE MEDA ORGANIZATION

- **Fully Transitioning into “MEDA 2.0”:** In addition to executing its major responsibilities and initiatives during FY 2020-21, and achieving all of the organization's goals, MEDA worked vigorously and diligently to transition the entity from its historic status as an advisory board and marketing organization into a more fully developed local economic development organization. Among the many activities executed to strengthen the organization:
 - Preparing a budget, plan of work, metrics and execution strategy and timetable.
 - Hiring, onboarding and mentoring the Executive Director, a former Vice President of Business Development, and Administrative Project Coordinator.
 - Building tools required for conducting economic development and deal-generating activity.
 - Establishing an office presence at Maricopa City Hall.
 - Restructuring MEDA's marketing contractors and services to continue to devote more resources and expertise to “boots on the ground” in support of the startup marketing and toolkit building activities.
- **Ensuring MEDA continues to deliver value to business, government, education and the greater community in a cost-effective manner:**
 - **Planning and Convening Meaningful Board Meetings:** Like most other organizations in the U.S. and across the world, MEDA's Board meetings were convened virtually. All Board members shared their experiences in terms of navigating through the multiple challenges of this unprecedented event.
 - **Closely Collaborating with the City of Maricopa:** MEDA's Executive Director, Board members and Senior Advisor continued to work closely with the City Government, instituting regular appearances and presentations to the Maricopa City Council and very close work and collaboration with the City Manager and key City staff.
 - **Closely Collaborating with Other Partners:** MEDA continued to strengthen long-established relationships with Pinal County Government, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Arizona Commerce Authority, Maricopa Chamber of Commerce, and Maricopa Unified School District.
 - **Being Accountable and Transparent:** In addition to monthly activity reports prepared by the MEDA staff, Senior Advisor and Marketing Contractors, quarterly activity reports are prepared and circulated to the entire Board as well as to the City Government in compliance with MEDA's City contract. Monthly financial reports are prepared independently and again, shared with the Board of Directors. Additionally, strict measures are in place to approve and pay invoices, which is handled independently through the generosity of Electrical District No. 3.
 - **Maintaining and Growing Private Sector Funding:** In addition to City of Maricopa funding, MEDA also is supported by the private sector members of its Board as well as by its Senior Advisor. During FY 2020-21, MEDA retained 95 percent of its non-city, private sector funding – no small feat given the economic shock and impacts resulting from the pandemic.



Maricopa Economic Development Alliance



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