

The Rio Rancho Tea Party

Volume 5

September 2014



Frankenroads

A hodgepodge of mismatched appendages with seeping wounds, holes and patches. Scars from surgeries to repair bursting arteries. Stitches and seams zig-zagging their length and breadth. Roads in Rio Rancho have a face only a mother could love, and during monsoon season they turn into a real monster.

Our roads aren't pretty, but they get us to and fro... most of the time. Rio Ranchoans take pride in the fact that our city routinely makes all the "good" lists for quality of life, schools and public safety. But funding roads gets tricky, especially since our general fund budget is equivalent to that of Farmington, a city half our size. Alarmingly, 2012 was the first year a Governing Body implemented a road maintenance fund to keep up with repairs.

Past governing bodies have relied on revolving road bond cycles to fund roads, but much of that money ended up funding new roads. The costs are staggering. With 475 miles of city paved roads, it would cost about \$665 Million

(\$1.4 Million/mile) to repave them all. Yearly optimal maintenance of paved roads costs around \$57,000/mile, while our 144 miles of dirt roads come in at \$5600/mile to maintain. \$60-70 Million will reconstruct Southern Blvd, which is in the planning and design phase now.

Frustratingly, the County leaves Rio Rancho to pretty much fend for herself, using the perpetual excuse that they have to take care of the unincorporated areas of Sandoval County. Rio Rancho revenue and property taxes provide the lion's share of the County's revenue, yet we only get back the bread crumbs. In FY13 the County spent a whopping \$272k on Guadalajara Road and drainage, and \$18k on an experimental coating on Agora Rd (because a resident was complaining about dust.) The County is also adding 4 tax increases to the ballot in November. It would be a nice gesture if our (Rio Rancho) County Commissioners would pledge their discretionary funds to roads in Rio Rancho.

Residents should be happy to know that last year our Governing Body purchased new road repair equipment and an additional road grader. This year they increased the general fund road maintenance budget to \$1 Million. Since 2012, our Council has managed to shield us from the road bond bullet during hard economic times, but it is an eminent reality looming in our future. They should continue to work toward increasing our gross receipts revenue base by stimulating business growth and construction. The big bad developers also help the city by often paying millions on constructing or paving city arterial roads into their developments.

Patience is hard to learn in an age of instant gratification, and as slowly as government moves, planning ahead is critical. In the meantime, let's try to keep it in perspective – as long as the roads serve their purpose and are structurally sound, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

September 2, 2014

Sheriff Candidates Showdown!

- ◇ Doug Wood
- ◇ Jesse James Casaus

Moderated by Mark Scott

Raffle Item:

\$100 Gift Certificate donated by Rio Rancho Armory

October 7, 2014

Election Round-up!

Join us to learn more about many of the candidates in the November election!

Code Enforcement - The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Code Enforcement. It's the gift that keeps on giving. We've all been on the giving and receiving end of this

precious gift. Noise, dogs, weeds, fences, vehicles, signs, junk and so on. We get the added bonus gift in some dis-

tricts of very conscientious Code Enforcement Officers. Personally, I wish I could return or exchange mine.

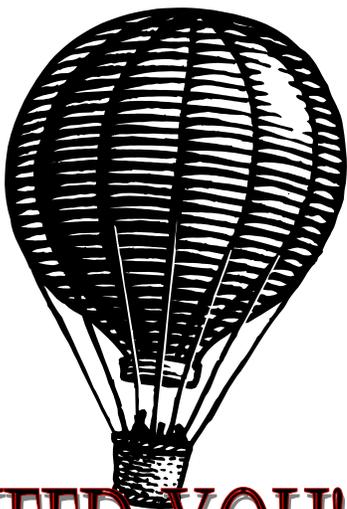


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Code Enforcement—The Gift That Keeps on Giving (Continued)

Each Code Enforcement Officer has a beat, as they say. We've heard before that code enforcement is "complaint-driven". What is not being said is that much of it is up to the discretion and motivation of each officer. This gives these individuals a fair amount of control over our lives, and can sometimes seem like harassment. Have a neighbor with an axe to grind? No problem, Code Enforcement is there to sharpen their blade.

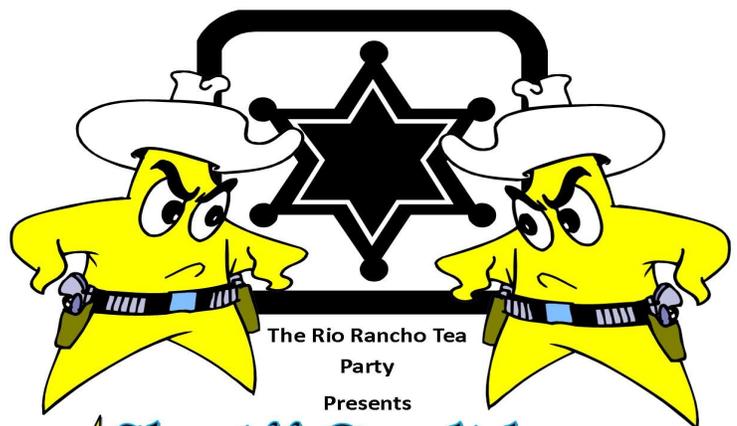
To be fair, they are just doing their jobs. And in some areas of town people wish their officer would be more aggressive; frustrated that nothing is happening. We do have unsightly weeds, fences and vacant homes to deal with, not to mention junkyards that should be featured on American Pickers. But we have to find equity in enforcing codes, which I believe has been sorely lacking.

Recently, we all girded our loins for the impending 'systemic' code enforcement blitz that never fully materialized. I'm not complaining, but I sure wish I could explain it to the man who recently received a criminal summons for (A) not having a garage and (B) not pulling a permit on an old garage conversion. This code requiring homeowners to have a garage was enacted years ago

in an effort to curb mobile home expansion around the city. In Rio Rancho simple garage conversions are commonplace. Yet the citizen outcry coming from my district all came from residents who received citations on the same street. Is it fair to hit one block, then skip the next five? And is this really the city's priority among violations?

If Code Enforcement is now going to initiate strategic or systemic blitzes, then there should be some rhyme or reason to the process. I suggest they zero in on the countless vacant homes that draw vandalism, criminal activity and squatters. Granted, it's harder to cite a distant entity than a person living on the property, but there is a code (law) which allows the City to cite banks that let their foreclosed properties deteriorate. Most importantly, let's be fair and consistent in enforcing codes city-wide.

In the absence of this elusive consistency, I think it would be a great idea to spread the love around a bit by rotating our Code Enforcement Officers quarterly. Like the proverbial fruit cake that gets re-gifted from year to year - This quarter I get the nice one, next quarter I get the... not-so-nice one.



The Rio Rancho Tea
Party
Presents

Sheriff Candidates SHOWDOWN

Tuesday, September 2nd - 7pm
Rio Rancho Church of Christ, 1006 22nd St.

Sheriff Doug Wood
Jesse James Casaus
Moderated by Mark Scott

Raffle

A \$100 gift certificate donated by Rio Rancho Armory will be raffled at the September 2nd meeting. \$1/ticket or \$5/6 tickets.



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