



Vote “Yes” on Sales Tax Increases

By Mary Ann Miller

President/CEO, Tempe Chamber of Commerce

They’re not kidding this time.

Unpleasant though it is, Arizona and Tempe really do need a temporary sales tax increase to see us through this budget crisis.

Notice that I said “see *us* through,” not “see *them* through.” This is our crisis, and the deeper cuts necessary if the sales taxes don’t pass will hurt us – not the City, not the State, but *us*.

No one likes to pay more taxes, and to do it at a time when businesses are closing, people are being laid off and salaries are being cut seems counterproductive. But the fact is that without these taxes those services that we rely on will not be available.

It’s true that we’re suspicious of government declaring the sky is falling. Every election seems to come with the threat of uneducated children and criminals in the streets. But programs have been cut to the bone and our debt is still moving upward.

These tax increases, coupled with the cuts to staff and services already in place, will stem the tide. It will allow us to look forward and recreate an environment conducive to an improving economy. It will allow us to develop programs and tax structures that will attract businesses to the area and help those already here grow. This will result in increased jobs, more spending and more income to us all.

Think of it this way. Let’s say your salary was cut drastically, with no hope of an increase in the near future. You stop going out to eat. You cancel your cable. Maybe you move into a smaller place, trade in for a less expensive car and dip into your savings, but you’re not making ends meet. So you have a yard sale, borrow from your family and put off paying some of your debt. And you’re still a bit off. Your only choices then are to stop eating lunch or dinner or find a part-time job. That’s what’s happening in Arizona and Tempe.

We can argue all day about how we got here and whose fault it is, to no avail. We are in this situation now and it must be dealt with. More cuts to the budget will critically impact our communities. Love it or hate it, vote “yes” on Arizona and Tempe temporary sales tax increases.

Mary Ann Miller

President/CEO
Tempe Chamber of Commerce