

Mayor's Report- U.D.O. Reform

One of the many hindrances to business health in Chino Valley over the last few years has been a collection of rules known as the town's Unified Development Ordinance. For business owners and citizens alike, the U.D.O. (as it is commonly called) has often proved to be a source of unending frustration- with some businesses going so far as moving to other municipalities in order to find a more accommodating business climate. Sign regulations, parking lot regulations, and engineering regulations can create such a harsh environment for businesses that oftentimes many prospective business owners simply pass by Chino Valley in their search for a place to settle. If we are to have a stable economic base here in Chino Valley, we need to find relief for the employers who are already located here and an attractive environment for those who are considering moving to the region.

One of the chief sources of aggravation for many business owners is the town's sign ordinance. This section of the U.D.O. has been a source of numerous complaints over the last few years, and now that some of our greatest hurdles are out of the way, we are finally getting an opportunity to address it. As last year drew to a close, discussions started between Council and Staff regarding the complete overhaul of this portion of the Town's U.D.O. and hopefully we will be seeing some preliminary outlines going before our Planning and Zoning Commission sometime in April. Although at first glance this should be a fairly straightforward process, signage can actually be quite a high profile issue. Balancing the concerns of the business owners (whose livelihood depends on their advertisements being seen) and the citizens (who wish to reduce the visual clutter) can prove to be somewhat of a challenge. Areas of concern regarding signage include location, size, number, and even height. Somewhere between a \$50,000 electronic billboard and a hand painted sheet of plywood lies the answer, and this is where we need input from the people of Chino Valley. Ruth Mayday, our Director of Development Services, is requesting input on signage from our business community and our citizens alike. Our businesses need signs that make them easy for customers to find, and our citizens want to keep the rural atmosphere that Chino Valley is famous for. The two don't have to be mutually exclusive: I believe the town really is big enough to have a thriving business community without losing its rural flavor.

Chris Marley, Mayor of Chino Valley