

Congressional Testimony
Chandler Vice Mayor Rick Heumann
March 20, 2014 Field Hearing

Good morning, I am Chandler Vice Mayor Rick Heumann.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for today's hearing.

Before I discuss the Chandler Education Coalition and its roots, I want to give a brief overview on the economic outlook of Chandler and the region.

Chandler today is a dynamic, economic generator that has branded itself as the Innovation and Technology Hub of the Southwest United States.

And for good reason.

We are a growing part of a global economy and a host to companies like Intel, Orbital Sciences, Microchip, Infusionsoft, QBE, Bank of America and General Motors' new Innovation Center.

Each of these companies – and many, many more, have a significant presence in our city.

The Price Road Corridor is home to many of these firms and consistently makes the top lists of "hot economic corridors" in the Arizona development community.

The greater Phoenix metro region also boasts a tremendous quality of life, with mild weather, low cost of living and amenities like golf, trails and an array of other outdoor pursuits.

Chandler also has one of the most stable fiscal positions, with AAA Bond ratings from all three national agencies -- one of just two cities in Arizona -- and just 31 cities nationwide to make that claim.

Finally, Chandler enjoys the second lowest cost of service levels for Phoenix metro residents, when taking into account property taxes, sales tax and utility costs.

Chandler has generated several thousand new jobs in the past two years alone -- and nearly 23,000 jobs from 2008 to 2013 – some of the roughest economic years this country has ever experienced.

Many of the jobs being created in Chandler and the region fall into the category of STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

We are truly shifting to a knowledge economy.

With that in mind, our City has partnered with Arizona State University and the University of Arizona.

ASU recently opened the Chandler Innovations Center in the City's former public works yard in our downtown core.

ASU is holding engineering classes there in a unique partnership with local industry.

This alliance also includes TechShop, a leader in the entrepreneurial Maker Movement.

The University of Arizona is holding classes in our Downtown Community Center.

These are master-level teaching courses that also include collaboration with our business community through a very intense internship program.

The U of A also has lab space at our City's Innovation Incubator for its Center of Applied Nano-bioscience and Medicine.

Chandler-Gilbert Community College partners with many of our local employers on specifically defined curriculum like clean room operations for Intel.

All of these programs are turning out a very educated and prepared workforce.

But, how do we sustain the development of a well-rounded, qualified workforce?

We must set our sites on developing educated workers literally from birth – so they are suitably prepared to enter the classrooms ready to learn from day one.

That is why, in 2011, I created the Chandler Education Coalition.

In this effort, I envisioned a collaborative, “systems building” effort to support the quality of educational opportunity and school readiness in the City of Chandler.

We invited members of the education community -- K-12, community colleges and our state Universities.

We have corporate leaders from several sectors of the economy.

And we have a host of nonprofit organizations at the table as well.

This committee, made up of more than 30 organizations, is committed to improving school readiness from cradle to kindergarten across the city of Chandler.

The purpose of the Chandler Education Coalition is to create a collaborative support system of community stakeholders to ensure all

Chandler children, birth through five, obtain the necessary literacy skills for school-readiness.

We recently partnered with Read On Arizona -- a statewide, public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders committed to creating an effective continuum of services.

Read On Chandler, like its parent group, will work to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children in these very formative years.

Another important component of this endeavor is our relationship with the Arizona Sci-Tech Festival

Chandler has been a leader in partnering with the Festival organizers at the local level

For the past three years we have held the Chandler Science Spectacular.

This three-day collaborative event brings awareness to the world of science and includes participation from several small businesses, high-tech companies, schools, and non-profit agencies.

It's very rewarding for me to see the enthusiasm and excitement from kids and parents alike.

Because, when we allow our youth to experience science activities up close and personal, it provides them with a vision that anything is possible for their future.

I am personally committed to finding and engaging new partners along the way.

We envision an educational pipeline that will offer the opportunity, tools and resources to allow every child in our system achievement and success.

We imagine companies understanding our purpose – and their role in this process.

And, we predict unparalleled success as a community from both an educational and economic standpoint.

A role model for the nation and for the world.

With that, I look forward to your questions and comments.