

Row Officers -- Maricopa County Study, 2012 - 2013

East Valley Team, LWVMP

INTRODUCTION

Background:

The Arizona State Constitution (Article 12, Section 3) provides that each county may have a number of elected officials. Most of us are familiar with the Board of Supervisors. But there are other elected officials including the Assessor, Clerk of the Court, County Attorney, Recorder, Sheriff, Superintendent of Schools and Treasurer. These are often referred to as the 'row officers'. They always seem to be far down or on the backside of the ballot. So, many people have no idea what these officials and their offices do, what big departments they head, the various tasks performed and the level of independence and autonomy they have. This article will briefly explain the responsibilities of each of the row officers and their offices. For more information, the email address for each will be included.

Assessor:

The Assessor's office administers all laws and regulations regarding property ownership and has the responsibility of seeing that all property is fairly valued. They maintain accurate data on each account on the tax rolls and include deed processing records. The office provides support services regarding valuation decisions that have been appealed. The mapping division maintains accurate maps and information on locations of property. Recently the office established an internal audit group with investigative powers that reports directly to the Assessor. Public service counters can be found at the County Administration Building at 301 W. Jefferson Street in Phoenix, at the Southeast County Complex on Javalina in Mesa, at the Santa Fe Freight Department in Phoenix and at the Sun City Taxpayers Association office.

For more information contact: <http://mcassessor.gov/assessor>

Clerk of the Court:

The office of the Clerk of the Court has the responsibilities of supervising Superior Court complexes in Phoenix, Mesa and Surprise. In addition it supervises Juvenile Court centers in Phoenix and Mesa. The duties and responsibilities include: providing court forms, managing a service counter for the public on Jackson Street in Phoenix and maintaining e-filing programs for many of the procedures. At this office you can obtain a marriage license, apply for a passport, arrange for wage assignments, and other support arrangements. In addition adoptions are arranged through this office and you can obtain copies of court records that are available to the public.

For more information contact: <http://clerkofthecourt.maricopa.gov/>

Treasurer:

The County Treasurer was one of the first positions named when Maricopa County was formed in 1871. The Treasurer's office serves as the tax collector; collecting for real and personal property taxes for the state, county, cities and towns, schools and special districts. The office then distributes them to the appropriate entities. Revenue information is provided to the County Board of Supervisors for budget purposes and the office serves as a bank for the county. There are on-line services where one can review tax bills, update addresses or make a tax payment. The Treasurer's office is located at 310 W. Jefferson, Phoenix.

For more information contact: <http://www.treasurer.maricopa.gov/>

County Attorney:

The County Attorney is the chief prosecutor for the county and must be an attorney at law licensed and in good standing in Arizona. The County Attorney's office advises the other county officers and defends actions brought against the county. This office tries approximately 35,000 felony cases a year and is also responsible for prosecuting misdemeanors in the unincorporated parts of the county. In addition to conducting trials and doing investigations, the office also supervises the probation department, maintains a victim's service department to assist crime victims and provides a variety of award winning community education programs. Offices are located at both County Court complexes in Phoenix and Mesa. Juvenile facilities are located on Durango in Phoenix and at the Mesa Court Complex. There is a Civil Service division located on N. Central in Phoenix.

For more information contact <http://www.maricopaattorney.org/>

Recorder:

The Recorder's office maintains the public records and legal documents for a variety of activities such as real estate transactions, personal property transactions and military discharge records. The public is more familiar with the services provided to voters. The Recorder's office is the registrar of voters and maintains the voter lists as well as arranging for polling places and doing ballot tabulation... The public can find information through their office for many things: voter registration, redistricting information, polling place locations, requests for early voting ballots, campaign finance and candidate information and to check on whether you are registered to vote. The main Recorder's office is at 111 S. 3rd Ave. in Phoenix with another office at the SE County Complex in Mesa. The County's election technical center (Election-MCTEC Center) is at 510 S. 3rd Ave. The Recorder's office also maintains kiosks in libraries in Surprise, Fountain Hills and Anthem.

For more information contact: <http://recorder.maricopa.gov/>

Sheriff:

The Sheriff's office provides local law enforcement for unincorporated parts of Maricopa County and it also contracts with several cities and towns to provide services for them. The Sheriff's office operates the county jail system. The county is divided into six districts with stations in Mesa, Avondale, Surprise, Cave Creek, Queen Creek and Fountain Hills and there are substations in Guadalupe and Gila Bend. The main office is on Washington in central Phoenix. The Sheriff's office patrols lakes, rivers and trails and maintains the Amber Alert system and Search and Rescue operations. The aviation division supports the other services and the K9 Unit has various specialties. Recently added were illegal immigration and counter terrorism services. There are jail facilities located at 4th Avenue, Durango, Estrella, Lower Buckeye and Madison.

For more information contact: www.mcso.org

(continued below)

Superintendent of Schools:

The Superintendent of Schools manages the Maricopa County Education Services Agency (MCESA) which provides a wide variety of services for local school districts. There are approximately 700,000 school age children participating in educational opportunities covered by this office. The office is also responsible for carrying out 100 plus mandates related to education in Arizona. The office supervises several student learning programs: reading and literacy, STEM instruction (science, technology, engineering and math), English learner's support and juvenile transition education. MCESA registers private and home schooled students and assists students in unorganized areas of the county to arrange for their education. Technical support is provided for 57 school districts within the county. 38 school districts are provided with business and payroll services. An elections division assists with school district governing board elections and special elections for bonds and overrides. MCESA is located at 4141 N. Central in Phoenix.

For more information contact: <http://www.maricopa.gov/schools/>

All information was obtained from either the websites of the various row officers or from Chapter III, pages 39-49 of County Government in Arizona: Challenges of the 1980's; prepared for the Forty-fifth Arizona Town Hall by the Center for Public Affairs, Arizona State University