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ARIZONANS, CFA WORKING TO ADVANCE CITIZENS' AGENDA

FIVE JUNE TOWN MEETINGS TO HELP DECIDE QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES DURING 2010 ELECTIONS

PHOENIX – This month Arizonans have some new opportunities to shape the conversation with candidates as part of the 2010 elections. Residents from five communities will participate in *The Arizona We Want* citizens' agenda through a series of invitation-only town meetings in Peoria (June 8), Flagstaff (June 14), Mesa (June 17), Tucson (June 21) and Sierra Vista (June 22). Additionally, all Arizonans are encouraged to submit their questions for candidates online at www.TheArizonaWeWant.org.

The town meetings will help frame specific questions for candidates in seven areas: job creation; education; healthcare; natural environment and water management; tax policy; immigration; and quality leadership and the modernization of Arizona's state government. The forums are being co-hosted by the Center for the Future of Arizona, the cities and local community organizations.

CFA will carry forward the citizens' questions in a consolidated report to be made available to all candidates, the media and others interested in the 2010 election. The questions will be compiled and published twice – prior to the start of early voting in the primaries, which begins July 29, and prior to the start of early voting in the general election, which begins October 7.

According to Lattie Coor, chairman and CEO of the Center for the Future of Arizona, the effort is designed to address the serious disconnect between citizens and elected officials. According to Coor, who is spearheading *The Arizona We Want* citizens' agenda, the Gallup Arizona Poll commissioned by CFA found that only 10 percent of Arizonans believe that their elected officials represent their interests. Recent online polling on *The Arizona We Want* Web site indicates that only three percent of those responding strongly agree that their elected officials represent their interests.

“Despite the perception that Arizonans have very different perspectives and interests, the Gallup Arizona Poll found there is remarkable consensus among our citizens on a broad range of issues and public policy positions,” Coor noted. “The challenge now is to make sure we elect public officials who will help move Arizona forward in a way that is consistent with what our citizens want.”

Every Citizen's Voice Matters

“*The Arizona We Want* is a powerful new wave of civic engagement that has huge potential for making our government truly representative of our citizenry,” Coor said.

The center encourages all citizens to contribute to the “citizen voice” by submitting their questions online and taking the Gallup Arizona Poll at www.TheArizonaWeWant.org. Thousands of individuals have participated online since the formal poll was completed last year, including members of more than 50 Arizona organizations.

"Increasing the number of citizens who are taking the Gallup Arizona Poll online will strengthen our shared commitment to greater civic engagement," Coor said. "It will also encourage candidates for public office to take our collective concerns seriously."

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ARIZONA

The Center for the Future of Arizona (www.arizonafuture.org) is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Phoenix.

It is helping to shape and define Arizona’s future through an action-oriented agenda focused on issues and topics critical to the state.

More than a think tank, the center is an independent “do tank” that combines public-policy research with collaborative partnerships and initiatives that will create opportunities and quality of life for all Arizonans.