

Mayor's Monthly Message: August 2020

It is official! The Town of Florence has been ranked #1 as the Best Place to Retire in Arizona. We are the county seat of Pinal County, known as one of the oldest towns in that county. The Town of Florence is regarded as a National Historic District because it has over 25 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are many retirees who call Florence their home now. If you are living here, you will also enjoy the abundance of town activities, as well as some parades on old Main Street. While this is a rural area, it is rapidly growing!

Would you like to learn some history of your town? Want to get out of the house? If so, the Town of Florence has an audio tour available for you. Take a walk, bike ride, or car ride throughout historic Florence. This tour is approximately 1.4 miles long and a total of 29 stops. Take a few snapshots of you and your family while on tour. Mention the Town of Florence in your social media post along with the [#FlorenceRec](#) [#HistoricTour](#) [#VirtualRec](#) to spread the word of this resource. The following link will take you to the audio tour. <https://bit.ly/2WOoEYN>

In addition to our smart growth, we are also working diligently and strategically to continue providing quality services and support. On March 27th, President Trump signed the CARES Act into law. This Act provided funding to cities, towns, counties, and states to help their communities recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 27th, Governor Ducey announced that \$441 million of the \$1.8 billion that the State of Arizona received would be available to local governments to help cover the regular payroll costs of public safety personnel. In turn, this could free up some existing capacity in some local governments' budgets that could be used elsewhere. The Town is exploring how best to utilize some of our allocation to also support local businesses and nonprofits.

Of the \$441 million allocated by the State for the AZCares fund, Florence is eligible for up to \$3,148,226. These funds are meant to cover Town expenses spent in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and were justified by submitting the expenses for Public Safety from March 1st through December 31st (as projected). Any disbursement from the Town of these funds would still be subject to the same regulations and guidelines on the CARES Act funding from the U.S. Department of Treasury and the statutes and regulations of the State

of Arizona, including the 'Gift Clause.' It is important to note that because of the limited funds received from the State (only 37% of what the federal government said that cities and towns should have received), and due to partisan disagreements relating to a fourth federal stimulus package, it is unlikely that the Town will receive additional funds.

In Florence, 63 small businesses have already received Payroll Protection Program forgivable loans of up to \$150,000, and one Florence business received a loan of between \$150,000 and \$300,000. These businesses range from Non-profit Organization to LLCs and Independent Contractors to Self-Employed businesses. We do not have data on how many may have also applied for or received Economic Injury Disaster Loans or other SBA loans/grants. However, we will continue to keep informed and disseminate information, while working collaboratively to support our community.

As a town, we are being reflective with our budget and funding, working to provide assistance and supports during this time. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email: Tara.Walter@florenceaz.gov. We will be having meetings regarding these special funding opportunities and programs, as well as communicating our plan for continuing to provide quality services for our citizens. As always, there are great things happening in Florence, AZ. We have the best community and people! Stay safe and enjoy. 😊

Sincerely,

Tara Walter
Town of Florence, Mayor
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