

A TOWN OF RESILIENCE AND OPPORTUNITY
SUPERIOR, AZ



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AMBITIOUS PLANS LEADING TO AN
EXCITING ROAD AHEAD

AT A GLANCE

SUPERIOR, ARIZONA

WHAT: A small town experiencing growth and transformation

WHERE: Pinal County, Arizona

WEBSITE: www.superiorarizona.com



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Although small in size, Superior, Arizona, is a town with ambitious plans and an outsized focus on the future. With much to offer, this vibrant community is surrounded by the majestic beauty of the Superstition Mountain Wilderness and is just an hour away from the excitement of downtown Phoenix. Currently, Superior is undergoing a transformation that is revitalizing its economy, enhancing its infrastructure, and preserving its heritage.

A THRIVING DOWNTOWN RESURGENCE

Once filled with boarded-up storefronts, Superior's downtown is breathing new life into its streets. At the heart of this is the creation of community-oriented spaces, including a downtown stage and amphitheater, which hosts a variety of events throughout the year. A Farmer's Market food court has also been established, providing a space for food-based entrepreneurs to showcase their offerings, and to support the downtown events and festivals.

Beautification efforts are also underway, with the replacement of planters with shade trees, meeting sustainability and walkability needs. "We're really seeing our downtown come back to life in a very meaningful and strategic way, but we try not to get too wrapped up in plans that we can't necessarily afford. So, we're very cautious regarding what we can do with the budget that we have," says Mayor Besich.

The launch of the "Adventure Elevated" tourism and promotional brand in 2020 has been at the forefront of this downtown resurgence, the mayor stresses. "That brand launched and really set us apart to say, 'Superior is a great place to visit'. We continue to expand our festivals, events and activities because of the rise in the number of visitors our marketing has generated."

The town has also embarked on a cooperative marketing program with the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Rebuild Superior, Superior Chamber of Commerce, and corporate partners, BHP Mining and Resolution Copper Mining. "This collaboration has helped us to augment our marketing budget and leverage our collective strengths so that we can continue to promote our community," she emphasizes.

REBUILD SUPERIOR

A key element of the town's revitalization efforts is Rebuild Superior, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to economic development and improving quality of life for residents. The organization adopts a bottom-up approach, addressing everything from food insecurity through the local food bank to job skills training and entrepreneurial support. "The community needed a nonprofit partner to target opportunities and obtain funding to support our





initiatives,” expands Executive Director, Manuel Guzman V. “We also needed to be aggressive about telling our story and attracting outside investments. We vigorously advocate for the community wherever we can. When we say Rebuild Superior, this is not just a physical building, although that’s part of it. It’s quality of life that’s mission critical for us.”

NEW DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Superior is also making strides in industrial and commercial development, marked by a land exchange with the federal government. Town Manager, Todd Pryor explains, “It includes a new industrial and commercial highway frontage site, and an airport. That’s about 546 acres, and it’s probably the largest land transaction in the town’s last 50 years. This is a significant increase in the available buildable space for employers and jobs in our town.”

The development of the existing airport is important to these future growth plans. “It was transferred to us from Pinal County about 20 years ago, and it had a reversion right that limited development on it. Now, we are purchasing the reversion outright, which will allow us to subdivide and lease or sell sections for business and industrial use as well as for airport contiguous use,” Pryor recounts.

A FOCUS ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

The pandemic highlighted Superior’s unique appeal as a great place to live, especially for remote workers. Mayor Besich says this increase in attention has strained the existing housing stock, creating a need for more diverse options, from RV parks for transient workers in the mining industry to apartments and patio homes for younger residents.

The acquisition of the 546 acres includes residential development, and plans are underway to ensure that this meets both current and future needs. Along with this, Superior is embracing infill development opportunities. “We try to be as flexible and amenable with our zoning processes,” she portrays. “Our unwavering approach in dealing with desirable housing and employment projects is, ‘How do we get to yes on this?’”

In addition, an upcoming project on the north side

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UNLOCKING ARIZONA'S POTENTIAL: THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF RESOLUTION COPPER

In the heart of Arizona's Copper Triangle lies Resolution Copper, a groundbreaking project poised to revolutionize the supply of critical minerals while delivering significant economic, environmental, and social benefits. At a time when copper demand is expected to triple by 2040, this project stands as a beacon of innovation, sustainability, and community collaboration.

Resolution Copper is set to supply 25% of North America's copper demand for the next 60 years, ensuring a domestic supply of this essential mineral for clean energy technologies, modern infrastructure, and national defense. From electric vehicles and wind turbines to power grids and advanced defense systems, copper is the foundation of progress, and this project is ready to deliver.

Beyond its national significance, Resolution Copper brings local benefits to Superior, Arizona, and its surrounding communities. The project will create over 3,700 direct and indirect jobs, generating \$270 million annually in employee compensation. It has already invested millions in educational initiatives, including over \$5 million for STEM programs that equip the next generation of Arizonans to thrive.

Sustainability is at the core of Resolution Copper's vision. The project will utilize advanced mining techniques to reduce its water footprint, consuming 7-10 times less and leaving more water for nature and communities. Completing a \$75 million, 15-year reclamation of the historic Magma mine site is another testament to Resolution Copper's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Collaboration with local communities and Native American Tribes is central to the project. Resolution Copper formalized its dedication to transparency, mutual respect, and shared success through a pioneering Good Neighbor Agreement. Over a decade of consultation ensures the project respects cultural heritage and aligns with community priorities.

Resolution Copper is not just a mining project; it is a catalyst for economic growth, a model for sustainable practices, and a cornerstone of America's transition to a clean energy future. By addressing our nation's critical mineral needs responsibly, Resolution Copper is helping to secure a brighter, more sustainable future for Arizona and the United States.

As Resolution Copper continues to advance through the permitting process, the project remains committed to turning potential into progress and delivering value for generations to come.



of town will provide affordable housing for first-time buyers, incorporating a sweat equity model that allows families to contribute labor and reduce costs. “We do experience some of the affordability issues that most cities across the nation are dealing with. In part, this is because it’s easier to build in areas where there’s mass density. Even though we are just 40 minutes east of the Phoenix Metro, costs are a little bit higher here,” the mayor acknowledges. “But

we are working on ways to make sure that it stays affordable for people here in Superior.”

One of Superior’s priorities is providing options for multi-generational families, helping to increase housing options, and supporting residents. “We’re seeing across America that loneliness is becoming its own epidemic and that has all sorts of other socioeconomic issues that come into your community,



So, encouraging multi-generational housing is very helpful for the mental well being of young and some of our legacy residents alike,” Besich elaborates.

PRESERVING NATURAL BEAUTY AND PROMOTING TOURISM

When it comes to tourism, the Boyce Thompson Arboretum is the crown jewel of Superior. Established by Colonel Boyce Thompson, a prominent mining magnate and influential leader from a century ago, his vision for the Arboretum was to study arid desert plants and their potential for food production.

Today, the Arboretum features plants from deserts across the world including several endangered species. “It is quite the extraordinary destination,” Besich boasts. “It takes about two days to see all of the Arboretum. They have a variety of wonderful events throughout the year that not only adds to the benefits of living in Superior but also just coming out to visit. That’s an important anchor point for many of our visitors.” From the Arboretum, tourists

often venture into the downtown or explore the surrounding Tonto National Forest. The vast network of trails is also a draw, and Superior boasts more 4x4 trails than even Moab, Utah, a destination famous for its outdoor adventures.

With this comes the responsibility of preservation, and ongoing efforts are being made to protect the local trails and the Arboretum, which is one of Superior’s largest employers outside of mining and government. “We have to work hard to not only protect those jobs and protect the plants, but we’ve had to work through wildfires and other challenges to ensure our visitor trade remains vibrant,” Besich details.

An important project that exemplifies Superior’s commitment to both tourism and environmental preservation is the Queen Creek Restoration Project. In collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the town is working to reintroduce water into Queen Creek, not only improving the area’s environmental



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health and downtown fire safety, but also enhancing walkability and recreational opportunities.

MINING AND THE GREEN ENERGY TRANSITION

Superior's history is deeply intertwined with mining, a factor that continues to influence its future. The upcoming Resolution Copper project has the potential to meet 25% of the U.S. copper demand, making it a vital component of green technology. This initiative is expected to play a major role in shaping the town's economic landscape. "We like to say that Superior is a small town with global impact," Besich claims. "The mine is definitely a net positive for the community overall, because it's going to create jobs, it will continue to provide stimulus to our small businesses, and it will open the door to other mining related firms. Just as importantly, the mining activity will provide resources that will enable us to reach companies across a broader range of economic

sectors to consider locating their operations here in Superior."

Pointing out that Superior is committed to leading the way in sustainable and environmentally conscious mining practices, she asserts, "We know it's always going to be part of our economic DNA. We hope to continue to be leaders in the conversation around sustainable mining, and environmentally productive mining."

A UNIFIED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Superior's resurgence is not just about economic development—it's also about creating a town that residents are proud to call home. As Guzman expresses, "We call it God's country. It's breathtakingly beautiful here. No matter which direction you look, you're in awe of just how wonderful it is to live here. And then you start meeting the people, and the warmth, the friendliness, the welcoming, all of

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Boyce Thompson Arboretum



Explore the desert



Taste local wines







that comes through.”

The town’s progress since 2016 has been remarkable. In just a few years, Superior has transformed its finances, turned around its reputation, and laid the groundwork for a prosperous future. Looking ahead, Mayor Besich says the focus will be on “economic diversification, affordable housing for everyone, and solid community programs that will build and enhance the lives of all residents, young to old.”

PREFERRED VENDOR/PARTNER

■ Resolution Copper

www.resolutioncopper.com

Resolution Copper is developing one of the world’s largest untapped copper deposits in Arizona. Set to meet 25% of U.S. copper demand, the project focuses on sustainability, creating 3,700 jobs, and supporting clean energy, infrastructure, and national defense. Committed to community collaboration, it drives economic growth while protecting cultural and environmental resources.

■ Rebuild Superior, Inc

www.succeedinsuperioraz.com

Rebuild Superior, Inc., a nonprofit entity, advances Superior, AZ, through initiatives like Succeed in Superior, Visit Superior, the Superior Enterprise Center and other programs. Collaborating with local and state partners, the organization fosters economic and community development while leveraging Superior’s assets and its proximity to the Phoenix Metro for growth opportunities.

■ Town of Superior, AZ

www.superioraz.gov

Superior, AZ, located 40 minutes from the Phoenix Metro area, offers a rich quality of life with scenic landscapes and abundant outdoor recreation. The town features a diverse economy driven by entrepreneurship, tourism, and mining. Residents benefit from a strong sense of community, evolving educational opportunities, and vibrant economic development.

Superior AZ

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