

The Tombstone Epitaph.

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131 YEARS IN THE TOWN TOO TOUGH TO DIE

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Officials balk at revealing Chamber audit results

By Matthew Casey
The Tombstone Epitaph

More than two months after canceling a presentation of a review investigating expenditures of city money by previous Chamber of Commerce administrations, officials refuse to release the report to the public.

The new mayor and council's relationship with the chamber had a rocky start. The January resignations of Executive Director Pat Greene, President Don Taylor and three other board members followed a city request for financial information on the chamber run but city-owned Boothill Graveyard gift shop. This led to accounting questions about how other city monies were spent. This spring, J.R. Botts, acting as executive director, used chamber funds to pay for a

financial review by Heinfeld, Meech & Co.

The review was scheduled for presentation to mayor and council on July 12, but according to the minutes from the meeting, the company canceled it until law enforcement could complete an outside review.

"I'm as much in the dark in that (the financial review) as anybody," said Councilman Steve Troncale. "It's like smoke. It's like a mystery. Nobody's seen it. Nobody knows what's in it. It's like this mysterious document that's floating around in Never Never Land."

Marshal Billy Cloud has the financial review's preliminary report, but said he won't release it because it is not complete. Cloud said his office is not conducting a criminal investigation. He asked the chamber to seek out a third party arbitrator to help

complete the review by interviewing Greene and Taylor.

The Tombstone Marshal works for the city, and Cloud said because the financial review examines the expenditure of city money, he could be viewed as having a conflict of interest if he were to conduct the interviews. Without a criminal investigation, he said using the third party arbitrator would also ensure "protection of personal reputations."

On Sept. 12, the Epitaph filed a Freedom of Information Request with Cloud, the chamber and the city asking to see the report. Cloud explained his reason for not releasing the report prior to the Epitaph's FOIA request. The Epitaph believes the review's scope of investigating the use of public money makes it a public record. The Epitaph's request asked Cloud, the

chamber and the city to provide a response by 1 p.m. Sept. 19.

Tombstone Chamber of Commerce Vice President Dave Bales said, per Cloud's request, he could not comment on what's in the review or when it might be made public.

"We're frustrated that we can't hand it out," he said.

Barnes followed up with the Epitaph immediately and said the city does not possess a copy of the financial review's preliminary report.

Meanwhile, mayor and council are debating whether to take away the job of promoting Tombstone from the Chamber of Commerce and hiring an outside manager.

The possibility the chamber could lose its promotion responsibilities comes two months after the expiration of the chamber's city contract that paid it \$4,500 a month in bed tax



Marshal Billy Cloud

the Boothill Graveyard gift shop, giving the chamber about \$6,000 a month for the same purpose.

Tombstone Chamber of Commerce President Susan Wallace said the organization is working with the city, and she hopes a compromise can be reached. Despite loss of revenue from grants and state programs, she said, the chamber is examining ways to increase the money it spends on promotions by using fund raising strategies to match the money contributed by the city.

"These things take time," she said. "I think the possibility of the city coming in and starting from ground zero would be unfortunate."

Troncale said the chamber's previous lack of marketing strategies and its almost constant state of administrative "flux" are the reasons

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Luke Money / The Tombstone Epitaph

Kevin Rudd, Tombstone public works project Manager, points to damage from a recent flood in Miller Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains on Sept. 13. Rudd has been working to repair landslide and fire damage to the aqueducts in both Miller and Carr Canyons.

Seeking prosperity, finding a problem: Kevin Rudd looks to go with the flow

By Luke Money
The Tombstone Epitaph

Kevin Rudd steps out of his truck in Carr Canyon, his \$200 hiking boots crunching on the loose rock underfoot. He reaches into the backseat and belts on a short dagger. (Because he forgot his gun, he says.) Slung a bag over his shoulder he begins the mountain trek he makes every weekday.

Like thousands of pioneers before him, Rudd came to Tombstone looking for prosperity. What he found was a town in trouble.

Two aqueducts. One thousand plus people who depend on them. Zero water.

This summer's Monument Fire ripped through Carr and Miller canyons in the Huachuca Mountains and subsequent landslides wreaked havoc on the town's water lifelines. A chance meeting with Mayor Jack Henderson, and emergency funding from Gov. Jan Brewer later, Rudd became Tombstone's \$50,000 man.

Rudd, a Tombstone neophyte by way of Tucson, Scottsdale and the Florida Keys, was now charged with keeping the town from drying up.

A line of corroded pipe snakes its way into the mountains, its very existence and functionality indicative of the "town too tough to die." For 130 years, the iron and nickel pipes have pumped water more than 30 miles from the mountain springs to town, using only gravity.

"This system is really a historical marvel," Rudd says, his eyes scan-

For more on H₂O woes:

Protecting the pipeline: City faces ongoing issues about preserving its 30-mile right of way.

Quality control: City combats fire's damage to progress on water health.

Peddling potables: Bottled "Tombstone" water for sale made in Phoenix.

ning a pipe section.

The pipe eventually leads to an anachronistic sight: A tarp, lashed over a concrete collection tank. Rudd's eyes light up as he goes to look into the tank, where water waits to flow into the pipes.

When Rudd first went into the mountains this same tank was filled to the brim, not with water, but with dirt and sediment. A few days of arduous digging with his coworker, Mike Kern, and the tank was clear.

Then the rains came. Then the landslides came. Days of work, gone in a twinkling.

"So," Rudd says. "We did it again."

Now Carr Canyon's water flow is protected by a collection of cloth and tangled wire, looking more like a

MacGyver contraption than an engineering solution in a disaster area. But, as Rudd notes over the audible gurgle of water sloshing in the tank, it's working.

At Miller Canyon, however, the sights are not quite so welcoming.

The road to Miller winds through the mountains, mountains which are dotted with blackened trees and vegetation, a stark reminder of the cataclysmic events Rudd was hired to clean up after.

The truck bumps over a wash area, prompting Rudd to look outside.

"Man ... they had a major flow event through here..." he trails off, seemingly considering the implications of his statement.

The walk up to the work area does nothing to allay his fears. Portions of

the trail, smooth days earlier, are covered with sediment, loose rocks jutting up irregularly.

Most concerning, though, no water. The flow is blocked upstream.

With every step there is more evidence of Rudd's fears. Sides of the canyon are bowed inward, cut by a sudden swell.

He stops as the work area comes into view. A low, whistling intake of breath. A string of muttered expletives. His and Kern's work is gone. The rain and following flooding has washed away every vestige of their labor. Rudd says only a massive amount of water, he estimates a flow of 500 feet a second, could have done this.

Rudd tramps upstream, his boots splashing through the trickle of water that determinedly forges a new path through piles of debris. He reaches a small fall, where the water trickles down a series of rocks. Placing his bag nearby he cups his hands in the stream, catching the water as it falls.

"This is the freshest water you will ever find," he says, sipping the water from his hands. "This is what I'm here to do, to get this water 30 miles to Tombstone."

Rudd says there is no timeline for finishing the project, but that ongoing temporary repairs will continue until February. As for the damage in Miller Canyon, Rudd knows exactly what to do.

"Do it again," he says. "It might take a couple of weeks, but we'll do it."

Business owners toss and turn over bed tax increases

By Robert Alcaraz
The Tombstone Epitaph

With a 100 percent hike in the Tombstone bed tax, town officials suspect to see more profit, but not everybody is happy about it.

Gordon Anderson, owner of the Larian Motel, thinks that it is unfair to place new taxes only on the hospitality businesses and not others in town such as restaurants and bars.

"We have lost business because of the increase, which pretty much just puts a nail in the coffin with this economy," says Anderson. "I think they just went after a soft target and it outrages me because we have to charge so much more; I'm just pissed."

Anderson, who has been connected to the Larian Motel for more than 30 years, has seen the bed tax gradually increase over time. Even though his emotions on the matter are sky high, he does understand that money is a necessity for Tombstone.

"I realize that the city needs money, they need it now, and this was a quick and easy solution for them. The mayor and city council are good people, but this idea isn't the best for everybody," says Anderson.

Dan Vetter, manager of the Wells Fargo RV Park, agrees with Anderson.

"We feel singled out in all of this," says Vetter. "Everyone should be pulling the same load and not just us; it truly feels counterproductive because, as a business, we are just losing income."

Vetter, who has also seen his business lose customers, wants to see the money put to good use.

"It wouldn't be so bad if we were seeing anything productive happen to the city, but we haven't even seen weeds pulled."

The bed tax was raised, town officials said, to bring more cash into the town's general revenue fund.

With the increase, Tombstone is now tied with Tucson, Marana and Oro Valley for the highest bed tax rate in all of Arizona.

George Barnes, Tombstone's city clerk/manager, understands the frustration felt, but stresses that it needed to be done.

"Tombstone had lost 25 percent of all revenue and we needed a way to make some it back," says Barnes. "This was a total necessity for the town."

Barnes says that he sympathizes with everybody that is affected, but that it made sense to raise the bed tax.

"We have over 200,000 visitors a year and we don't charge them park-

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Recycling to refuse: Tombstone buries a 7½-ton glass problem

By Andrew Schaeffer
The Tombstone Epitaph

Tombstone began recycling cardboard years ago, but glass will continue to be dumped in landfills because town officials say it costs too much to haul away the town's beer bottles.

"It seems like common sense to recycle," bartender and cook at Vogan's Alley Bar Selia Medeiros said. "Every bar in town tosses glasses bottles, so there's a lot that can be recycled."

Medeiros said she sees more glass bottles in the garbage than waste some nights. "It's ridiculous how many recyclables sit in the landfill instead of being reused."

"There's worse things to be put in landfills than glass," Heather Schmuki, major account representative from Recycle America, a subsidiary of Waste Management, said at the Aug. 30 Tombstone city council meeting.

At the meeting, Schmuki also mentioned that recycling glass would



Robert Alcaraz / The Tombstone Epitaph
Selia Medeiros, employee of Vogan's Alley Bar, crushes soda cans in the stock room on Sept. 13. The bar does not recycle its cans because Tombstone lacks a system to process aluminum, glass and plastic.

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Bisbee convert promotes city to nation, world

By Matthew Casey
The Tombstone Epitaph

For tourists, Phoenix and Tucson are Arizona's identity and serve as a base for expeditions into the history and legend of the Grand Canyon State. But Ilona Somerekanich, director of the city of Bisbee's Visitor's Center, has a different view.

She points out that Southeastern Arizona was the state's first economic hub and Bisbee, propelled by its lucrative copper mining industry, was Arizona's original destination for entrepreneurs and tourists.

"I might be embellishing a bit," Somerekanich said. "But I maintain Tucson and Phoenix are here because of Bisbee."

She's paid to take such an attitude. Somerekanich is a Bisbee city employee who, from her office in the back of the Bisbee Visitor's Center, designs marketing strategies to lure

tourists to town as their base for Arizona vacationing. Inspired by her success, the Tombstone city council recently began examining if the town could benefit by following the Bisbee model.

Somerekanich said Tombstone has an advantage over other communities in Cochise County because of its international name recognition. She said she would "rather remain neutral" on Tombstone's possible decision to take over tourism promotion, but has met with Tombstone officials, shared Bisbee tourism statistics and its marketing plan.

"I have a lot of respect for the Tombstone officials and the Chamber of Commerce," she said. "The only thing I would say is if you have a mission in place, do not reinvent the wheel. Ultimately, you have to work together."

The city of Bisbee took over tourism promotion when a 2004 voter-approved ordinance removed the responsibility from the Chamber

of Commerce. Somerekanich left her position as chamber's director, and took the full-time job as director of the visitor's center.

"I (still) work hand in hand with the chamber because some issues overlap," she said. "Whereas the chamber represents all types of business, the visitor's center's mission is to promote tourism both present and future."

Akin to the old Bisbee model, the Tombstone Chamber of Commerce is responsible for operating the visitor's center and promoting tourism. It has not hired a permanent replacement for former Executive Director Pat Greene, who resigned in January. President Susan Wallace said the chamber board presented a new marketing strategy to the city three weeks ago.

"We believe the chamber is the marketing arm of the community, es-

pecially one like ours," she said. "We have a great board. We've put in hundreds of volunteer hours (to develop the marketing strategy.)"

The city of Bisbee rents space for the visitor's center in the downtown convention center, which is recognized by the Arizona Office of Tourism as a "model center." Somerekanich said it operates on a budget slightly more than \$130,000. Monies from the city's 2.5 percent Transient Room Tax (bed tax) finance it. The center also receives funds from the Queen Mine Tour, which shares revenue up to \$16,000 a year.

Somerekanich said a staff of eight volunteers is responsible for maintaining the www.discoverbisbee.com website, social media accounts, brochure inventory, scheduling and mailings. Last year, the center had a

\$40,000 budget shortfall and a paid employee was laid off. As a result, Somerekanich said, "there has been unofficial talk of raising the bed tax."

"On a day-to-day basis, we are the front line with information for our tourists," she said. "We have to remember our ultimate goal is to get folks to our cities."

The city of Tombstone's contract with the chamber expired at the end of June. Under the old contract, the city gave approximately \$4,500 a month in bed tax money to the chamber so it could fund city promotion. The chamber continues to receive promotion funds from its operation of the Boot Hill Cemetery gift shop, whose profits have steadily increased since it took control. Although, Councilman Steve Troncale said that due to a previous lack of marketing strategies and the almost annual turnover of the chamber's administration, the city is considering whether Tombstone could

benefit from hiring someone like Somerekanich to promote tourism.

"It all revolves around getting a good manager," he said.

Somerekanich grew up in Wabash, Ind., and admits she never heard of Bisbee before visiting. Drawn by the West's "pristineness" and weather, she moved to Bisbee in 1998 and began her love affair with the town. Her passion for her job is evident in her dedication. In addition to developing marketing strategies and overseeing operation of the visitor's center, she serves on more than a dozen tourism councils, logs countless hours of off the clock research, courts travel writers and filmmakers.

Undeniably, she's a Bisbee convert. "I think about the tourist coming through the tunnel (into Bisbee)," she said. "Here's this architectural diversified mining town... Folks you will not believe what we have in this county."

Recycling

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not be beneficial to the city. "Where does it come to the point where you're defeating the purpose of recycling? Because you have to take it four hours away."

Rodney Glassman, who is working with Schmuki and Waste Management on Tombstone's trash situation, said Tombstone's recycling is taken to a facility in Tucson, but the glass would have to be taken to their Phoenix facility.

Medeiros said she was surprised when she learned glass would have to be taken to central Arizona. "I figured they could take the glass to Sierra Vista for recycling."

She said. "It seems wrong that the closest [recycling plant] is so far."

Waste Management is always looking to promote recycling, Glassman said, and the company would be willing to open a recycling

center to better serve southern Arizona if they could cover their costs. Even though Tombstone's bars trash about 7 1/2 tons of beer bottles every week, the volume is not high enough to create a new facility.

"Glass isn't as expensive or intensive to make as, say, plastic or aluminum, so the price we can sell it is lower than other recyclables," Glassman said. "And with the market price so low for glass, it would not be in the city's best interest right now since selling [the recycled glass] would not cover the costs of hauling it."

Glassman noted the problem is not that Waste Management is against recycling glass south of Phoenix, just that the market is not there. Though glass can be recycled in Tucson, the companies looking for the glass are

mainly in Phoenix, he said. "There aren't any companies who are looking to purchase our recycled glass in southern Arizona," he said. "While that opportunity isn't there today, it could become apparent in the future."

Local beverage seller Johnny Fields has opted for a different approach in order to cut down on the town's waste. Fields sells water in plastic and sarsaparilla in glass bottles mainly to tourists so the garbage can hopefully be recycled when the visitors leave Tombstone.

"When I walk the streets to deliver more cases around town, I hardly ever see any of my bottles in the trash cans," he said. Fields suspects more than 90 percent of his sales are taken out of town.

His water he started selling two months ago, Tombstone Tolerable Water, is handed out in heavy plastic bottles.

"[The plastic] played a huge part in where I got the water," he said. "I wanted the bottles to be reused over and over and not crack from wear and tear."

Glassman noted Waste Management's efforts of working with the city on their recycling concerns. "We're going to be expanding the bulk recycling to include aluminum and plastics as part of the program," he said, adding that creative programs to educate the town on the importance of recycling will be coming in the near future.

A self-proclaimed strong believer in recycling, Medeiros said she prefers customers who order draft beer instead of a bottle. That way she can just pour the brew into a mug and then wash it when empty.

"It's great because it cuts down on trash and wasted glass bottles so much," she said. Medeiros said she does not think most patrons drink draft for that reason, but it makes her happy nonetheless.

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the city is considering using bed tax money to hire a separate promotions manager.

Three weeks ago, the chamber did present the city with a two-year marketing strategy. Tombstone Chamber of Commerce Vice President Dave Bales said the chamber has not received feedback, or a response from the city. The plan highlights targeting specific U.S. and European markets, event promotion, public relations, strengthening the chamber's website and increasing its traffic.

City Clerk/Manager George Barnes said "there is room for the chamber in the process (of promotion)," but Tombstone's biggest challenge is implementing a marketing strategy.

"At the end of the day we all have the same goal: Healthy promotion of the city of Tombstone," he said. "The debate is what's the best way to do it."

Wallace said previous contract restrictions did not allow the chamber to hire someone to

specifically focus on promotions. Also, he said, the uncertainty that comes with having a 60-day contract cancellation notice on the Boothill Graveyard gift shop made it difficult for the chamber to pool the necessary resources to implement a marketing strategy. The chamber "put out feelers" but is yet to hire a professional replacement for former Executive Director Pat Greene, she said. In the meantime, the chamber's approximately 100 members are logging "hundreds of volunteer hours," said Wallace.

"It's difficult to find someone when you can't tell them what they will get paid and specifically what their responsibilities may be," she said. "Until we find out exactly where we stand, we can't make a specific (hiring) plan... It's kind of like hurry up and wait at this point."

Councilman Jim Dougherty said the chamber recently turned down a city contract proposal that would reduce bed tax monies by more than one half, but be subsidized by increasing profits from the Boothill gift shop. The remainder of the bed tax money, he said, would have gone to balance the city budget.

Wallace said the chamber did not turn down the city's offer.

"That was something that was proposed and kind of went away," she said. "The (chamber's) board thought it was worth a try, as long as it could be re-negotiated if it didn't work, but it never came to fruition."

Meanwhile, Troncale and Dougherty are studying the tourism promotion model the city of Bisbee enacted in 2004, when voters approved transferring promotion responsibilities from its chamber of commerce to a promotion manager. Ilona Somerekanich is director of Bisbee's Visitor's Center. She took over the job in 2004 and also oversees development and implementation of the city's promotion strategy.

Instead of the chamber producing quarterly reports on tourism promotion to the city, Dougherty said the new Tombstone manager would report directly to Barnes, who reports to mayor and council.

Mayor Jack Henderson said the city looks up to the chamber as the "finest business people in Tombstone," but in a time when revenues are decreasing, Bisbee successfully promotes itself by spending less money.

"Directly and indirectly the city is pro-

viding close to \$100 thousand a year..." he said. "Its one of those moral imperatives that we make sure those tax revenues are correctly expended."

Amidst the uncertain future of who will be responsible for promoting Tombstone, the chamber and the city continue to enjoy success working together on other projects. About three years ago, the chamber took over operation of the Boothill Graveyard gift shop. Officials agree the store has since surpassed expectations in profits and efficiency. Troncale said the work ethic of gift shop manager Dave Askey, who was the chamber hired, is the main reason why.

"He's a real cracker jack of a manager," Troncale said. "You couldn't squeeze another buck out of that joint."

Less than a year and half ago, the city backed a chamber negotiated deal to keep the state from closing the Historic Cochise County Courthouse, and take over its day to day operations. Troncale said the state was running the museum at a loss, but the chamber brought in over \$100 thousand last year. Under law, money made from historic sites like the courthouse can only be used for their

maintenance and preservation.

"The Courthouse runs extremely well," said Councilman Jim Dougherty. "They (the chamber) do a great job."

Wallace said the chamber is extremely proud of its work at Boothill and the courthouse, and it is pressing forward with plans to create online gift shops for both entities.

But a decision to take control the job of promotion from the chamber would not be unprecedented for Tombstone's previous and current mayor and councils. In July 2010, the city took over operation of the Senior Center, hiring a new manager. Earlier this year, the council voted unanimously to kill the Food Bank's lease and worked with the Tucson Food Bank to execute another management shake-up.

Still, Troncale said that nothing has been decided, and city officials are hoping there is a "middle ground."

Mayor Jack Henderson said he hopes the issue is "decided sooner rather than later," but has not scheduled a vote on the mayor and council agenda.

"We can't expect instantaneous results," Troncale said. "But we need to do something, because this town is really hurting right now."



Robert Alcaraz / The Tombstone Epitaph
Anderson is upset with the cities' decision to increase the bed tax.

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ing or admission to many things; all we ask is an extra \$2 a night," says Barnes. "Most people probably have no idea that it is an increase and don't even think twice about paying it."

Passed in mid June, the increase was the first Tombstone has seen since 1995 when it was raised to 3 percent.

Barnes recollected what occurred in 1995 when the bed tax was last increased. He told the story of a city official who was in the same position as he is today. The city official, according to Barnes, knew that Tombstone's tourism wouldn't sputter because Tombstone is a tourist's town. He knew that a 3 percent increase wouldn't matter to the tourist, as long as they were able to see the town for what it is.

Barnes sat back in his chair and said, "Somehow, I think they'll still come."

Carrafa, council face-off ends in standoff

By Kellie Mejdrich
The Tombstone Epitaph

Mike Carrafa, once the owner of one of the town's most popular nightspots, won't give city council a rest.

His wife, Noreen, asked the council to approve a liquor license under her name for a new bar – the Doc Holliday Saloon – to open on Allen Street this fall. The council punted, but the Carraras aren't done yet.

Now, they are waiting on state approval before opening the town's latest tavern.

When the item came up for a vote Aug. 30, the council remained silent for almost 30 seconds before deciding not to make a decision.

City Attorney Randy Bays argued the license should include both Mike and Noreen Carrafa's names because they are married and the bar should be considered community property in the meeting.

Mike Carrafa then addressed the council. "There is nothing that says it has to be under both names," he said. "This is my wife's business. I run a completely different business."

Council members refused to comment on the matter.

Mike Carrafa sees this as another example of butting heads with city leadership—something he's done before.

"It sounds to me like a little double dealing here because of certain people in this town," Carrafa said at the meeting.

This issue all traces back to bad blood when Allen Street business owners didn't like Carrafa's Six Gun City saloon passing out fliers and attracting customers. Those complaints led to a solicitation ordinance that limited how Tombstone entrepreneurs could advertise their wares, Carrafa said.

Then came a slew of run-ins with city leadership. Mike Carrafa was arrested by the marshal for

violating that ordinance. He was ejected from a city council meeting in October 2009 after suggesting former Mayor Dusty Escapule's wife seemed to be exempt from the solicitation ordinance.

Last December, Six Gun City burned down. Ten months later, the marshal's office still has not completed an investigation into the cause of that fire.

Shortly after the fire, Mike Carrafa got council approval to extend the liquor license to the Allen Street location, but in January, state officials shut down that bar.

"It's like more than high school. It's up to them. I don't have any animosity towards people but I thought they were my friends," Mike Carrafa said.

Council or no, "we're getting this license anyway. Its just a formality," Noreen Carrafa said. The mayor was equally nonplussed.

"It was a courtesy approval—the city has no say in a liquor license," Mayor Jack Henderson said.

Tombstone has 19 active liquor licenses and three are pending, including Doc Holliday.

The Tombstone Epitaph.

Founded on the Southwestern frontier by John P. Clum, May 1, 1880

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City awash with problems along right of way

By Kellie Mejdrich
Tombstone Epitaph

City officials uncovered a number of properties that have been illegally tapping the waterline running from the Huachuca mountains into the city of Tombstone.

"People were kind of attaching themselves to the line. That's happened probably in more than one place," said City Clerk/Manager George Barnes.

Kevin Rudd, public works project manager, said the number of people and amount of tax-free water that's been tapped is unknown.

"There is concern people can and probably have illegally tapped into the line," Rudd said. "We have to do the investigative work before we start pointing fingers. Right now, mostly, we are just establishing

temporary repairs."

Following the Monument Fire, a slew of water problems including the illegal tapping seeped to the surface of Tombstone's 130-year-old line.

In 2001, councilmembers voiced concern about properties encroaching onto the city's right of way on top of the water line, a gravity-powered aqueduct that's been Tombstone's since 1881. Officials are concerned that the properties might sit atop areas that would one day need repairs.

When monsoon rains flooded the scorched Huachuca Mountains, significant parts of the lines were decimated and the city was forced to search old maps to find springs and make necessary repairs to get Tombstone's waterline running.

Nancy Sosa, archivist and researcher for the city of Tombstone, said that the issue of

Did you know?

Tombstone purchased its water line in 1947 for \$10.

protecting Tombstone's right of way isn't new; it's as old as the line itself.

"Water is the most precious thing in the desert, people are going to do what they need to get water," Sosa said. "We need to do everything we can (to protect the line)."

But tapping into the unfiltered spring isn't safe, Rudd said. The water isn't potable.

Added to the mix of right of way concerns is the potential that properties resting atop the line could be damaged or demolished if the line broke underneath.

This was all confirmed after Sosa and

other city officials combined dozens of maps from as far back as 1880 to relocate the line. They drew a new Google map using an extensive combination of field research, old maps, and new technology.

That map shows houses smack on top of the line, Barnes said, which could potentially be a problem.

"It's dangerous. If that (line) punctures, that's 1,200-1,400 pounds per square inch. When it gets a hole in it, it digs a hole 30 feet deep. And if something happened we'll have to tear down everything on top of it," Barnes said.

Why didn't people know about the water line? Until last year, when Cochise County agreed to notify land buyers, many people didn't know it existed.

"If people are going to be building we would make them aware," Supervisor Ann English said of the new agreement. "To my

knowledge before that it wasn't even a matter of public record that the people even knew the aqueduct was there."

But Sosa denies that the line wasn't public record—they've had it as long as the city has, since 1881, she said. Blame falls on those who sold the property, who didn't tell the buyers about the line.

So far, no one's house has been dug up. But it's a concern, Barnes said.

Though tapping is illegal, property just sitting on top of the line in areas that need to be repaired won't be destroyed—the city hopes issues can be resolved peacefully.

"We're working to be judicious about letting them know it but not necessarily heavy handed about it," Barnes said. "We hope we don't have to do anything. It's expensive and it ticks people off."

City's water supply still feeling heat from Cochise summer wildfires

By Jazmine Woodberry
The Tombstone Epitaph

The Monument Fire burned parts of Cochise County and only complicated the water situation in the city of Tombstone, leaving the arsenic levels high.

This affected the relatively arsenic-free spring water from the surrounding canyons.

The spring water usually gets mixed with water with higher arsenic levels in Tombstone in order to bring the level down to the Environmental Protection Agency's 10 parts per billion standard.

The city has three main water sources: the spring water and two wells.

The Tombstone aqueduct is a 30-mile pipeline connecting springs in the Miller and Carr canyons to reservoir for the city's drinking water. This provides 50 to 80 percent of the water for the residents of the city.

The secondary water source is provided by two groundwater wells inside the city, one with test results near the upper arsenic limit and the second below the limit.

The one near the upper arsenic level fluctuates between 8 and 12 parts per billion.

"It sounds like a big fluctuation," said City Clerk George Barnes. "We're talking parts per billion. It's miniscule."

The arsenic rule requires public water systems to test their drinking water wells once every three years to ensure compliance with arsenic levels. Tombstone's water has been tested 12 times in the last

three years, and only had less than the recommended arsenic level twice. The amount of times a city's water is tested depends on the city, according to public information officer for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Mark Shaffer.

All the water quality checks done since February 2009 by the department have turned up elevated arsenic levels in the water.

Barnes said, however, the well with the higher levels usually runs about 8 to 8.5 parts per billion depending on the sampling period.

But he said it's also important to realize the upper limit used to be five times as high. Until 2001, the EPA's maximum standard for arsenic in drinking water sat at 50 parts per billion.

But studies have shown even the reduced level might be a problem.

A study by the National Academy of Science said drinking two liters of tap water a day at the current levels puts cancer risk at 1 in 500.

A more recent study by toxicologists at the University of Arizona showed consistent exposure to drinking water under the current EPA guideline of arsenic has resulted in poorly effected glucose metabolism, reminiscent of type 2 diabetes in mice and human subjects.

Mice tend to develop higher glucose levels over time. But the mice exposed to higher arsenic levels developed diabetes-like symptoms twice as fast as their counterparts.

"The consensus in some of that research is that even 10 parts per billion might even be too high," said Dr.

Janick Artiola, an associate research scientist in soil, water and environmental science who works in the UA's water quality lab.

"The geology in Arizona is such that we have elevated levels of arsenic. As it collects in the subsurface (of the soil), the water dissolves arsenic and other elements, and it can produce elevated levels of drinking water standards," Artiola said. "Unfortunately, quite a few places in Arizona can exceed that level naturally."

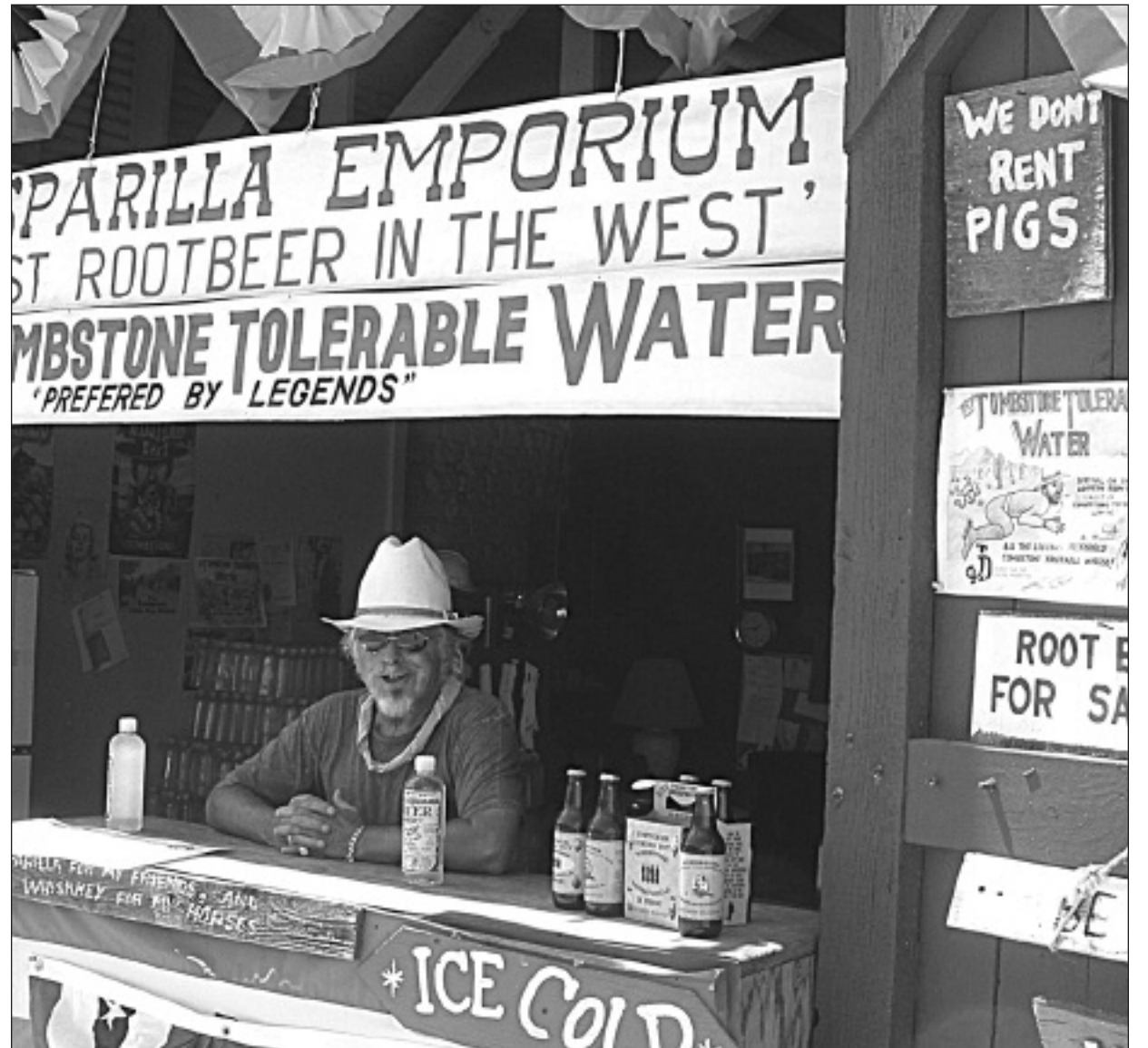
And Barnes said that's an issue they are tackling with the hiring of Kevin Rudd as a full-time temporary worker coming up with ways to manage the water.

The start-up budget comes to \$50,000, furnished by city resources and the state, and includes stabilization of infrastructure damaged by mudslides, refurbishing transmission and pipelines to move spring water and restoring the water system supply to flow fresh, healthy water into the city reservoir. Replumbing the system has to be done by mid-February, which will return the high arsenic well into a reserve well, Barnes said.

Further expenses are estimated at \$200,000 and will address reconstruction of the original infrastructure using modern materials and securing water collection areas to prevent contamination.

Federal grants, which could take well into 2012 to secure, will help pay for these expenses, according to Barnes.

"What's to know is that the water will be fixed and it's going to be better," Barnes said.



Andrew Schaeffer / The Tombstone Epitaph

Johnny Fields sells his Tombstone Tolerable Water from his stand on Third Street. Though branded as aged water from local wells, the water is shipped from Phoenix.

Businesses tap into water fears

By Andrew Schaeffer
The Tombstone Epitaph

Without all three springs flowing water into Tombstone to mix with the town's well water, arsenic levels in the tap water have increased. Though the danger is there, residents continue to drink from the faucet.

"I've lived here for 17 years and I've always drank right from the tap," said Kari Lord, manager of Tombstone General Store. "Everyone I know still drinks from the tap, too."

The store is one of the few local sellers of bottled water and Lord said she has not seen an increase in the demand for their imported water.

"I don't think it's a big deal," she said. "And I think the rest of the town feels the same way."

An owner of the Mini Market, Susan Addison, told a similar story. The gas station mini-mart also has free tap water for patrons and she said

people still come in to get that over bottled water. "I still drink it," she said. Her store has also not seen an increase in bottled water sales, she said.

"The water's been passed by the state," she said. "I think it's still safe, it's just higher levels of arsenic."

Tombstone normally mixes its arsenic-rich water with water pumped from three springs in the Huachuca Mountains. The pipes transporting that water to Tombstone, however, were damaged after the Monument Fire and subsequent floods tore down the mountain.

Addison said she was concerned about the town's water situation, but more with the amount of water available than its quality. If a large fire broke out in town, for example, officials may not have enough water to put it out and provide enough drinking water for the residents.

She said she hopes the \$50,000 state grant the city is received to pay an engineer to repair pipelines from the springs will help.

"One pipe (from the springs) is flowing already,"

she said. Addison mentioned urban legends circulating around town about people and dogs getting sick from the water, but she doesn't think there is any real concern. "I still haven't seen anybody glowing in the dark," she said.

With the tourist season picking up again, the issue of visitors' safety comes into play.

Ron Arko, the owner of the Tombstone Motel, said he was unaware of the heightened levels. No warning has been given to the guests of the motel about the water's quality because of this.

"If it were a big deal, we'd all be dead," he said with a laugh.

Arko made jokes about the water issue, even with the guests staying in the motel. He said the levels must not be lethal since there has not been a panic in town.

"Hey, we're all still alive," he said, noting he will continue to drink water from the tap.

One local beverage seller has turned the arsenic news into a new business venture. Johnny Fields said he had the idea to sell bottled water for sometime, but did not get started until the pipes from the Huachuca Mountains were damaged.

His sarsaparilla business has now expanded to include bottled water adorned with a skull and crossbones.

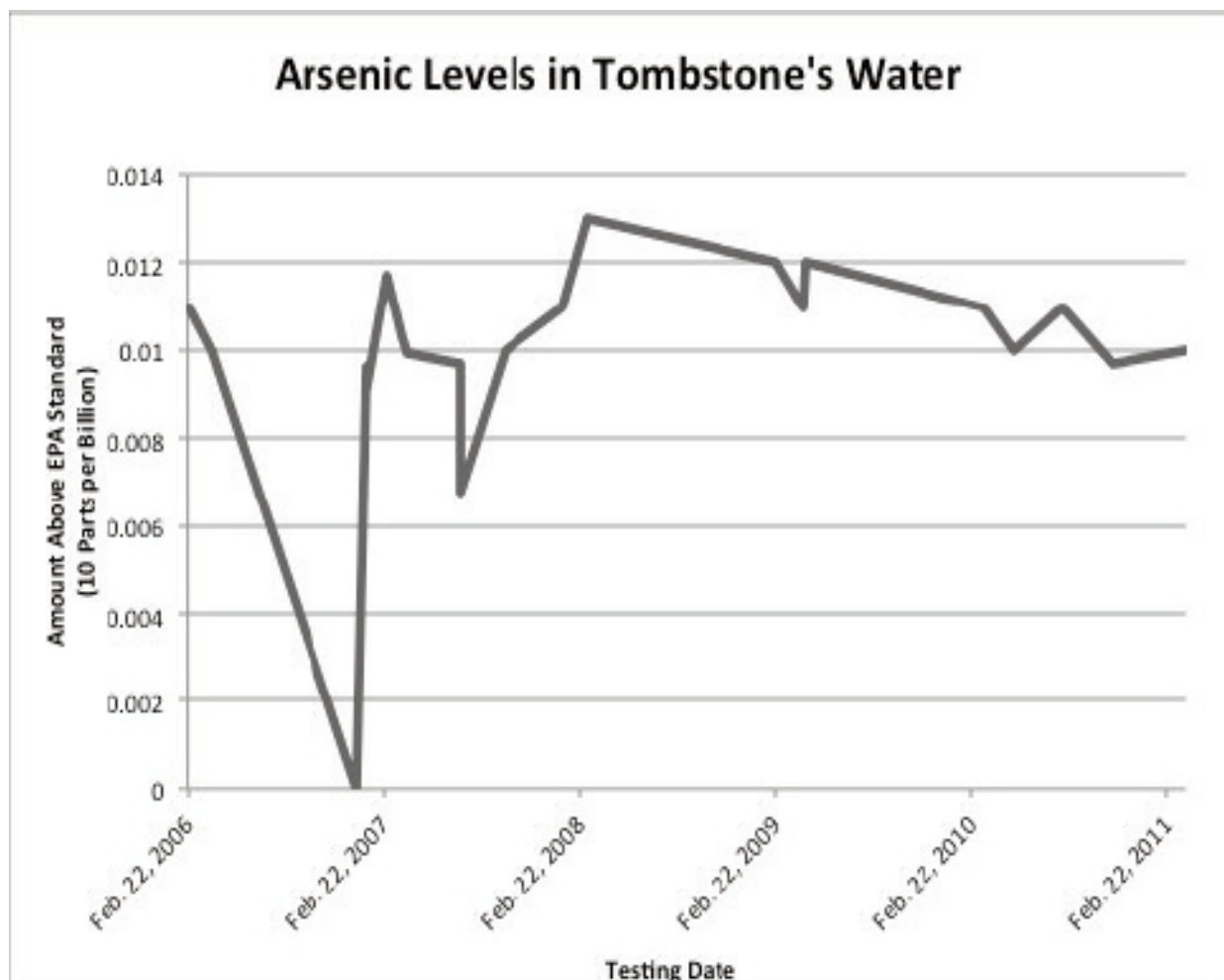
Though this water, "preferred by legends," is named "Tombstone Tolerable Water" and the label advises to "drink at your own risk," this liquid is not pumped from an old Tombstone mine.

"It's from Phoenix," Fields said through a grin. "I'm not selling water full of arsenic." He added that the mine on the bottle does not even exist.

Business started slowly two months ago when he started selling the water, but it is beginning to pick up, he said.

The bottles are made of heavy plastic, so they will not crack if curious visitors want to reuse the bottles or refill them with actual Tombstone water.

Tombstone's tourists mainly buy the water as a souvenir, he said, but many also drink it to combat the heat. "People pick this up and chuckle," he said. "If everything I sell makes people smile or laugh, I'm happy."



Graphic by Andrew Schaeffer / The Tombstone Epitaph

New owners means new look for Helldorado town

By Janice Biancavilla
The Tombstone Epitaph

Helldorado town, located on 4th and Toughnut Street, is under construction in preparation for Helldorado Days thanks to new owners Lee and Marla McKechnie.

The couple has big plans for the tourist attraction since they purchased the property in August, and hope to spruce up what the Arizona sun has worn down.

"It's dilapidated and has been falling apart," said Lee McKechnie. "It needs to be re-done completely."

Currently, construction on the town's outdoor theater is nearing completion. Fresh additions to the venue include a larger shaded seating area, new stage, and acces-

sible handicap pathways. Other improvements to the property include additions of entertainment displays on the mini-golf course, renovation of the shooting gallery, an old-town photo booth and gift shop.

Not all changes are not superficial. A new "Tricks of the Trade" show, performed in the outdoor theater, will give audience members a chance to see how stuntmen perform gunfights and dangerous feats.

"We want to educate locals and tourists on how we do stunts for movies, things we call 'squibs' or touchlines; basically a fighting demo", said McKechnie.

The new show will have three acts, the stunt demo, followed by a comedy show and historical reenactment. McKechnie is also leasing the building that once was

Maryann Welch's Tombstone Sandwich Shoppe to Chuck Sperry for the future "Chuck Wagon" restaurant. The lease for Welch's shop ended under new ownership and has since closed. McKechnie also noted the building needs to be renovated to meet health code standards before Sperry will be able to open for business, hopefully in time for Helldorado Days.

The restaurant will serve breakfast, lunch, ice cream, beer and wine.

"It will be like you're going to a ball game, but you're going to a gunfight," Sperry says. "Just a sandwich or burger and beer."

McKechnie is not trying to ruffle any feathers though. Although the new restaurant will be serving beer and

wine, he does not want it to be considered a "bar".

"We don't want to compete, just serve guests and tourists a cold beverage, but not to sit around getting drunk," he said. "We want it to be family friendly."

So why all the changes? After leasing the property on-and-off since 1997, the Tombstone Trolley Tours Owner decided it was time to get serious, purchase the property and re-vamp the tourist attractions. He hopes after construction is complete, the new-fangled Helldorado Town will attract corporate functions, wedding parties, tours groups or city functions. He even mentioned the possibility of having karaoke or live music.

A soft opening will be held on Oct. 8, and the Grand Opening on Helldorado Days Oct. 21-23.

RENDEZVOUS



Katie Cunningham / The Tombstone Epitaph

The group Paso del Norte Pistoleros reenact guns fights. From El Paso, Texas, members strive for historical accuracy in their shows.

The lowdown on Tombstone's annual shootout showdown

By Kevin G. Andrade and Skip Messick
Special to The Tombstone Epitaph

Gunfighters and historical actors from across the country converged in Tombstone the weekend of Sept. 19th for the 30th Annual Rendezvous of the Gunfighters.

Jogn Saglime Jr. came from Dallas and cited Tombstone as one of the main reasons he came to visit Arizona.

"It's important for us to remember the past," he said, "as long as we see how it was and not the romanticized 1950s movie version."

Bill Hargis, director of the Wild Bunch and Hell's Belles, the non-profit group that sponsored the event, said the gunfights are huge tourist draw. Since 1971, the group has raised more than \$200,000 for non-profit groups in town.

Diana Brooks, 49, traveled from Phoenix with her youngest son and oldest grandson to visit the town. "We wanted to get out of town for the weekend and my kids like Western stuff," she said. "I think it's good that they try to preserve the history behind it as well as they can."

Among groups visiting this year were the Paso del Norte Pistoleros from El Paso, Texas. The group has members with a military background and that was evident in their performances. "You have to do some research to do this," said member Heidi Wilben. "But it's still fun for the kids."

Debbly Irving, visiting from Phoenix, appreciated the historical accuracy. "I love the whole story of it," she said. "Just the history of it."



Skip Messick / The Tombstone Epitaph

The smoke gets heavy as two slug it out in the 30th annual Rendezvous of the Gunfighters.



Katie Cunningham / The Tombstone Epitaph
Robert Wilben, 3, gets dressed up for his father's reenactments.

1886 Merwin and Holbert 3rd Model Army 1883 Pistol, one of the higher quality weapons carried by Old West gunfighters.
Kevin G. Andrade / The Tombstone Epitaph



Tombstone High football leveling the playing field

By Mike Rabin
Special to The Tombstone Epitaph

The new \$1.8 million sports facilities will finally be under way at Tombstone High School after construction loans were approved last month. According to Principal Robert Devere, the developer has started some legwork, but most of the construction will begin this October.

"They will work on all the athletic facilities at once and should be finished by the end of the school year," Devere said.

Football facilities will be concentrated as more of a priority with plans on adding new goal posts, lights, bleachers, scoreboards, bathroom facilities and a snack bar. There will be a NCAA track built around the football field as well. Devere said the developer also plans to build baseball and softball fields along with tennis courts in front of the school.

The Tombstone Yellow Jackets football team now plays its home games at the old high school. They have already played their

first three games away.

The team has a new look this year according to Assistant Head Coach Joe Thomas. After losing their season opener, the underdog Yellow Jackets found themselves down 12-0 early against Bisbee.

"We were down quick and your typical Tombstone team in the past five years would just roll over, but we stepped it up," Thomas said.

Led by the newly acquired transfer quarterback, Anthony Prestly, the Yellow Jackets fought back and steam-rolled Bisbee 44-20. Prestly threw for 171 yards and four touchdowns in the victory.

"Everybody is tired of hearing Tombstone is nothing and that we're the underdog all the time," Prestly said. "We think we're the better team going into every game."

In what used to be a one dimensional football team, Prestly's ability to throw the ball has made the offense more balanced and harder for defenses to cover.

"Teams would just put eight (players) in the box against us and stop the veer," Thomas said. "When the defense respects

the pass, it opens up the run, and we have some good running backs."

A more balanced offense has led Thomas to believe that the team is capable of an eight-win season.

"I'm not expecting anything less than .500 this year," Thomas said.

One issue that could stand in the way of achieving this is the health of the players. A major weakness of the Yellow Jackets is depth as there are only about 15 varsity players on the roster. Thomas said that the first group is pretty good, but the team will need to develop some backups over the season if they are going to be contenders.

This past Friday night, the San Manuel Miners defeated the Yellow Jackets 48-14. Tombstone now finds themselves in a bind starting the season with a 1-2 record.

"These kids have a lot of heart and are tired of losing," Thomas said. "They are ready to play."

Prestly and the Yellow Jackets will face Wilcox today (Sept. 16) for its first home game of the season.

Schedule

- 9/16 Wilcox
- 9/23 Babo
- 9/30 @ Rio Rico
- 10/7 Morenci
- 10/14 Empire
- 10/21 @ Tanque Verde
- 10/28 Benson

Robert Alcaraz / The Tombstone Epitaph