

A Cultural Assessment  
for the town of



PRESCOTT VALLEY  
November 2001

Sponsored by the Town of Prescott Valley and  
the Arizona Commission on the Arts

**PRESCOTT VALLEY, ARIZONA  
A CULTURAL ASSESSMENT  
NOVEMBER 2001**

Sponsored by the Town of Prescott Valley and ,  
the Arizona Commission on the Arts, a State Agency

FACILITATOR: Nancy Wolter

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**TOWN  
OF  
PRESCOTT VALLEY**

**CULTURAL ASSESSMENT**

**SUMMARY**

A Cultural Assessment for the Town of Prescott Valley, facilitated by Nancy Wolter, Peer Consultant with the Arizona Commission on the Arts, November 15-17, 2001. Assessment sponsored by the Town of Prescott Valley and the Arizona Commission on the Arts.

# A Cultural Assessment for the Town of Prescott Valley

November 2001

## Overview

In April 2001, the Prescott Valley Town Council appointed seven citizens to serve on the Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission. In order to best determine the community's priorities, the commission members wanted to solicit ideas from the Prescott Valley community. They contacted the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the state arts agency, who has helped facilitate such a process in communities throughout Arizona through a tool called a cultural assessment.

A cultural assessment provides the foundation for a community's cultural planning. It is grounded in three basic beliefs:

- The most important resources to a community are found within the community.
- Culture is an active, vital force that we are constantly making and changing. It is through our culture that we express ourselves.
- Culture and creativity are closely related and our communities need creative people.

The cultural assessment process involves interviews with citizen focus groups. From these, a snapshot of a community is developed. Interviewees are asked what animates that community, what makes it special, what gives it its identity and values. From this picture, programs and services can be planned in response to a community's own needs and interest.

A cultural assessment for the town of Prescott Valley took place November 15, 16, and 17, 2001. Nancy Wolter, peer consultant with the Arizona Commission on the Arts, facilitated the interviews. Cyndi Coon with the Arizona Commission on the Arts assisted her. Nine interviews were conducted, and one public meeting. A total of 43 individuals participated in the sessions. The Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission is ably assisted by Chris O'Brien, who is the town's community relations coordinator. There is no dedicated staff liaison to the commission.

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*The arts need professional management, not be dependent on volunteers, who tend to come and go.*

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*Prescott Valley is a magnificent canvas to be designed and painted upon.*

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## Assessment Methods

The assessment included:

- Pre-planning meetings by telephone with Clyde Neville, chairman of the Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission.
- Interviews with nine focus groups November 15 and 16, 2001.
- A public workshop for planning concluded the assessment on November 17, 2001.

Participants were asked the following questions:

- What is Prescott Valley's identity?
- What is your vision for its future?
- What are the barriers to this vision?
- What are the community's cultural resources?
- What community partnerships will make the vision a reality?

## Key Priorities for the Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission

Six key themes emerged from the focus group interviews. At the public meeting concluding the cultural assessment on November 17, participants prioritized the themes as follows:

1. Hire a staff position dedicated to coordinating the work of the Commission. The position could be funded through a grant from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, which matches up to 50% of the position's salary.
2. Begin immediately to create the structure for centralizing communication, collecting information on cultural resources, and establishing a cultural clearinghouse. Design a look for the Commission that identifies it to the public. Advertise events on strategically placed electronic reader boards. Create a website.
3. Find ways to deepen arts education not only in K-12 schools, but for all in the community. Utilize the expertise of volunteers by enlisting them to teach. Pay a more professional wage for arts teachers in after-school programs.
4. Create opportunities for residents to experience the arts, whether as audience members or participants. This includes everything from an opportunity to sing in a choir to exhibit space for artwork (for kids and adults), to bringing people together for a Festival or a poetry reading or more informal performances.
5. There is a tremendous need for a central gathering place, a complex for the performing and visual arts, to include theatres for performances, space for exhibits, classrooms, outdoor gardens. Some central facility for the arts is critical.
6. Enhance the look of the town by encouraging public art, landscaping, and design.

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*Local arts agencies have contributed to the vitality of a community. Investment in culture has brought tremendous economic benefit to American cities. There is no other city connected service that collectively impacts business, tourism, the development of livable communities, and the quality of life for citizens. (American Canvas, a report by the National Endowment for the Arts)*

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**TOWN OF  
PRESCOTT VALLEY  
CULTURAL ASSESSMENT**

**SUMMARY OF KEY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS**

## Summary of Key Assessment Findings

### *COMMUNITY IDENTITY*

Prescott Valley is brand new, a “magnificent canvas to be designed and painted upon,” in the words of one Commission member. The town is rich in a number of resources: people with energy, experience, and expertise, with a passionate desire to serve and make a difference. The beauty of the area’s open spaces are treasured. Recreational opportunities abound. Small town values, from the genuine friendliness of people to an attitude that is open and accepting, are cherished. Festivals, from the World Arts Festival to Valley of the Lights to Prescott Valley Days, are well attended and popular.

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*I feel nurtured here, like I belong, that I matter.*

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But the growth of the area is explosive. Some say it’s as if the “town is a hodge-podge of people off in many different directions, trying to do something, without central leadership.” The town is busy catching up on its physical infrastructure, and budgets are always spread thin. Sidewalks and upgraded streets are government priorities.

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*The town can seem chaotic, like it’s running ahead of itself, trying to catch up.*

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Yet people interviewed said over and over that the community is “hungry for the arts.” There is little for the vast majority of kids to do unless it is sports. Private dance lessons are filled to the max, even though they may be expensive to the average Prescott Valley resident. After-school programs at the Boys and Girls Club and through Parks and Recreation are overflowing. And it is not just the kids who want classes in creativity. Adults want to learn too.

Prescott Valley is a middle-to-lower-middle class economy, with a conservative bent. Although it is a family-oriented community, there are many retirees on fixed incomes. But the population is changing, evidenced by higher-priced homes in subdivisions with luxurious golf courses. Some younger retirees are more affluent and willing to get involved as volunteers in the town’s activities. And the ethnic mix is changing. While the dominant culture is Anglo, there are many pockets of other minorities, from Hispanic to East Indian to Asian to African-American.

This future-oriented community feels fertile and “expectant” in the words of one interviewee. There is a chance to help in the birthing of Prescott Valley’s identity and a cadre of bright, articulate, and creative citizens—from youngster to senior citizen—want to take part.

## **VISION**

Residents interviewed want a cultural facility where performances can be produced as well as presented. They want classrooms where kids to adults can take visual and performing arts classes, where people can share their knowledge and expertise. Museums, to display local art, as well as to experience and broaden one's artistic viewpoint, are greatly needed. A children's museum, with hands-on exhibits, and fine art, would enrich the community. This complex doesn't even have to be grandiose, but a gathering place where people can come on a daily basis.

Such a complex can fit into the town's downtown village concept, where the Civic Center and the Harkins Theatre are to serve as anchors. This pedestrian-friendly "village" will be filled with interesting shops, open-air cafes, and gardens. But it could also include small performance spaces as well as facilities for public performances, exhibit spaces, and classrooms.

Parents want after-school enrichment programs for their kids. Older adults want to learn more about everything, from stained glass to understanding other cultures. Visual artists have very limited venues in which to exhibit their art, and need and want galleries as well as festival opportunities to share their art work.

In their vision, residents affirmed the importance of esthetics in the way things looked, from landscaping to buildings. They said that it was important to celebrate and recognize the art that was here, to appreciate the talent and diversity among the town's residents, from the youth to the older folks.

In designing their cultural vision, interviewees said it was critical that there be communication, coordinated publicity, a way to capture information about the people and programs that enrich the cultural environment.

## **BARRIERS**

Money, of course, is always in obstacle, especially in a town growing as fast as Prescott Valley. The arts are sometimes seen as "frivolous," and there are the perceptual barriers—that all is "okay as it is."

Several interviewees wondered about the \$400 impact fee collected from developers that is earmarked for "civic and

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*There is unformed potential here. An expectancy.*

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*Every person is creative, has creative impulses, and by birth is connected to a culture.*

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cultural use.” How is this money being used now by the town government?

Other barriers included the town’s lack of public transportation, making it difficult for some older folk as well as the youth to get around. The lack of cultural activities for the young is a great concern. “Rage and anger is a result of a loss of creativity,” stated several therapists. But it is not just the young that need a creative outlet. Everyone does. Some express themselves through recreational activities. But just as many express themselves through music, dance, art, literature, drama. A community must provide a place for this kind of expression.

A barrier cited over and over again was the lack of communication in the town about arts resources. There is not a dedicated source in the town where one can find information. And when there is an event, it is often under-publicized. The Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission as yet does not have a look or a logo that the public identifies with it. There is not a central database for collecting names of artists and those willing to share their talent and expertise.

There is not a dedicated staff member for the arts and culture, so the commission is left without full-time professional expertise, which is critical when searching for additional funding and resources. The town’s community relation’s coordinator does a fine job staffing the basic needs of the commission but she has her hands full in other duties for the town government.

There is a great deal of caution among some of the town leaders in supporting the arts. This lack of risk-taking is a barrier as the town begins to explore and affirm its own cultural identity.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

A number of cultural resources animate and enrich the town of Prescott Valley. From its talented youth to local musicians, actors, and artists, there is a rich cross-section of professional to amateur artists, teachers, and experts willing to share their talents.

#### **Places**

The area’s **open spaces** are a treasure. The town is nestled within rolling hills that change color with the light of day. At night, thanks to the “dark sky” ordinance, the sky is

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*Town desperately needs a focal point where people can come together to enjoy the talents of each other.*

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*A big barrier is the perception that it is “okay as it is.”*

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*We need to celebrate what is here, art that is here.*

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brilliant with stars. The town's preservation of open spaces, its **10 parks** and myriad **recreational opportunities** are cultural resources to be cherished.

The Town of Prescott Valley's Civic Center is home to an incredible art collection: more than a dozen bronze sculptures by renowned early 20<sup>th</sup> century artist Solon Borglum.

Nearby **Yavapai College** is upgrading a campus inside Prescott Valley. The college offers a performing arts series and is one of the largest elderhostel sites in the world. This means that a number of senior citizens, deeply interested in enrichment activities, are visiting nearby on a weekly basis.

### ***People***

There are a number of people whose talent brings people together. **Gene Ulibarri** and his son entertain in popular local bands. **Colleen Morris**, a senior at Bradshaw Mountain High School, has enlisted fellow artists to create ceramic tiles depicting key events in Prescott Valley's history. The tiles will be incorporated into the Civic Center complex.

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*I can make a difference here, my contribution is welcomed.*

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The Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission has a diverse and complementary membership: **Clyde Neville** directs and acts in plays, and is an advocate for a performing arts center; **Steve Parker** is a graphic designer, former art teacher, and former member of the Glendale Arts Commission; **Lora Lee Nye** is a vocalist and community arts advocate; **Cindy Interdonato** is a dance instructor and performer; **Allene Parker** is a textile artist and is interested in theater; **Milt Cannon** is founder and president of Prescott Jazz Society and is a musician; **Christine Scott** is an art and design teacher at the high school, and is an advocate for youth arts.

### ***Programs***

The local **Boys and Girls Club** has an outstanding arts education program; this past fall, six young artists had their artwork submitted to the club's National Fine Arts Exhibit program. The **Bradshaw Mountain High School's** advanced choir is in such demand, it can't keep up with the bookings. **Danceworks Studio**, a private dance studio, has to offer up to eight recitals at a time just to showcase its 150 students. The **Arizona Classic Theatre Company** does educational outreach in the community.

The **Chamber of Commerce** is directed by a dynamic leader, **Lew Rees**. There are 750 members of the chamber, who produce a number of well-attended.. From **Valley of the Lights** to the **Festival of the Lights**, to **Prescott Valley Days** and the **Fourth of July** celebration, events are enthusiastically supported and well executed.

Local arts organizations include the Prescott Area Arts Trust, Prescott Valley Art Guild, and Prescott Valley Performing Arts.

The town's **Parks and Recreation department** offers everything from free concerts, to fishing to golf, to swimming, to sports and other recreational activities. The staff is anxious to coordinate more visual and performing arts classes, if space allows.

The **Prescott Valley Historical Society** produces *Gold Fever Day* and plays an active part in community activities, even though it has no building for a home.

The town's **Public Library** is a comfortable, though crowded, facility and does terrific outreach programs for the homebound and for literacy. Its reading programs for kids are filled to the brim and it has an up-to-date e-book library.

The Community Relations department is responsible for organizing **World Arts Festival**.

**Harkins Theatre** is the only theatre in the area and attracts movie-lovers from all over the area. Other private businesses, such as the **Bronzsmith, Quilter's Dream**, and the **Hull Clayworks** cater to not only residents, but out-of-towners.

And finally, **Yavapai County Fairgrounds/Yavapai Downs** offers interested residents a number of fun activities, from horse racing to dirt bike racing to a Halloween Festival.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

The Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission can best enrich and enhance the arts and culture in the community by creating partnerships.

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*The arts are like seeds  
planted in our community.  
With minimal attention, the  
seeds will grow. But with  
nurturing, they will grow  
and bear fruit for the whole  
community.*  
*(Michael Hightower,  
president, National  
Association of Counties)*

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Interviewees identified a number of partnerships that would begin to move an arts agenda forward.

First, and foremost, a partnership with town government is essential, especially if the town is asked to staff a position to work exclusively with the Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission. Members can show that, with the town's support, they in turn can help the town immensely. With staff support, other funding can be sought, earmarked for programs that bring excitement and activities to the community.

With the town providing staff support, many partnerships and collaborations can take place that will animate and drive the cultural life of the community. For instance, a clearinghouse of information housed in town offices can match a teen volunteer with a project at the senior center. Or a program could be coordinated with Parks and Recreation, in which local artists and musicians are showcased in a festival.

Partnerships with the schools could help bring guest artists into the classrooms; with Yavapai College, performances could be shared. With homeowner associations, information about the town and its arts activities could be disseminated.

The Prescott Valley Chamber of Commerce and Prescott Valley Economic Development Foundation already partner with the town government in a number of ways. But the chamber and foundation can continue to reiterate the importance of building a cultural infrastructure that will help attract the businesses needed to the area. There is a push to lay the fiber-optic infrastructure necessary to attract technology. But knowledge workers demand cultural amenities, for themselves and for their children.

Service clubs, law enforcement, local businesses—all can play a part in bringing out the best of Prescott Valley's cultural life. But the key is professional staff dedicated only for this purpose.

### **SUMMARY**

Prescott Valley is bursting with growth. It is a fertile, dynamic community trying to keep up with all the demands that growth brings.

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*The arts bring people together, they provide opportunities for participation in civic life, and make many contributions to municipal affairs.*

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*80% of Americans say the arts make their communities a better place to live. (1996 Louis Harris survey)*

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But in the mix, arts and culture cannot be overlooked. The arts form the heart of any community. It is how people express themselves. Culture is how we express value and meaning. If a community does not make a place for the arts, it is to its detriment.

Surveys across the country document what the arts can bring to a town: vitality, excitement, “things to do.” Kids who participate in arts activities learn teamwork, safe ways to express themselves, self-reliance and self-confidence. Adults who participate in the arts report a sense of well-being, a feeling of being connected to their neighbor, gratitude for the opportunity to share their talent.

If Prescott Valley wants to grow into its own potential, it must embrace arts and culture as being at the core of that growth. While physical infrastructure is important, the values inherent in the arts are what give a community its sense of place, its core, its heart.

But the arts don't just provide a community with feel-good programs. The arts attract businesses. As our economy changes from an industrial base to a service-oriented one, knowledge workers are the new vanguard in building that economy. Technology is the future. If a community wants to attract hi-tech businesses, it needs an educated workforce. An educated workforce demands cultural amenities, as statistics in cities across America show. With its beautiful, natural landscape, proximity to international transportation and large cities, Prescott Valley can offer the new economy businesses a special and unique environment. But unless the arts are part of that environment, needed businesses will find a home elsewhere.

In summary, Prescott Valley is indeed “a magnificent canvas to be designed and painted upon.” Bringing the arts into the heart of that canvas will make it colorful, vibrant, bold and dynamic.

**APPENDIX A**

## FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS: SUMMARY

### *COMMUNITY IDENTITY*

#### *What is here....*

- Family-oriented, 29% kids
- Outdoor recreational activities
- Importance and primacy of open spaces and landscape, beautiful and unique
- Tension between traditional and future-oriented
- Bad traffic, congested
- Smallest minority population in the United States
- But pockets of diversity due to global studies and emphasis on multiculturalism in nearby colleges
- Isolationists vs. those who want to get involved, see an opportunity to contribute
- Middle-to-lower middle class
- Conservative in outlook and politics
- Large, impoverished population
- But population changing as well, with average home now at \$120,000
- Boomers as well as young retirees moving in, more affluence
- Service base: construction, low-paying jobs
- But businesses are changing, not just outlets or clearance sites
- Don't have a highly-educated workforce, mainly blue-collar workers
- But many with much experience and expertise, wanting to be involved
- Dominant culture is Anglo with traditional tastes
- Boomers, retirees, young people all wanting different things

#### *Feels like...*

- Expectant
- A magnificent canvas to be painted upon
- Don't know who we are yet
- Open, accepting, nurturing environment
- P.V. is "beer and peanuts," Prescott is "wine and cheese"

- Lacks traditions, or entrenched power structures
- Wide-open political system, no buried agendas
- Small town atmosphere in a good way: caring, helpful, nurturing
- Fain Family Foundation's strong, positive influence
- Feels leaderless

*Looks Like...*

- A hodge podge of people running off in different directions trying to do stuff
- Like a strange patchwork of homes and property
- Looks "Boxy, not elegant or graceful"
- Fertile, evolving
- Unformed potential



## *VISION*

### *A Central Place*

- A performing arts complex in downtown Prescott Valley, with outdoor gardens, theatres for music, dance, theatrical productions. Museums with galleries for local artists as well as visiting exhibits. A Children's Museum, with room for local artwork by kids as well as an interactive art museum.
- A place for small gatherings, open on a daily bases, where you can meet visiting writers, talk with friends, listen to music, hold poetry readings.
- A place for classes in the visual and performing arts, and for cultural enrichment, where you can take classes on various cultures and art forms.
- Use the new downtown as a place to integrate performance spaces and classrooms.

### *Image and Activities*

- Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes: connecting sidewalks, bike paths, dog-walking parks.
- Deepen arts education on all levels, bring the arts back into the classroom.
- Tap into the expertise and talent of local people, but pay a professional wage. Have experts with or without degrees sharing their knowledge.
- Celebrate what is here: the talents of our youth, of our older folk.
- Provide opportunities for people to express their talents, from a community band, to little theatre, to a community chorus, to local visual art exhibits.
- Integrate public art into the built environment.

## *BARRIERS*

- Finances are always a problem, as well as budget priorities on streets and sewers.
- While there is a \$400 impact fee collected from new development, earmarked for civic and cultural improvements, it is not known how this is being spent.
- No public transportation.
- New people coming in all the time, hard to keep up with basic services, or provide ongoing, consistent communication.
- All activities in the arts must be affordable, subsidized to some extent.
- There is a lack of an educated workforce to attract businesses that will expand the tax base.
- Communication and a central gathering place for data on artists, art activities almost non-existent.
- Arts management needs professional leadership, as volunteers come and go.
- Some on town council may not prioritize the arts as "necessary."
- Perception that all "okay as it is."
- Serious lack of art in the schools leads to apathy and indifference when adults.
- But art programs in schools lack help and funding, even supplies in short order.
- Much perception that the arts are a "mystery"; "unknown"; "too controversial," can be addressed with better communication, public information, and education on all levels which is now lacking.
- There is a lack of a unified image or vision for the arts in Prescott Valley.
- There is no central clearinghouse for the arts, a newsletter or a website in which people can exchange information, where activities in the arts can be publicized.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### *Places*

- Outdoor Recreation
- 10 Public parks (playground areas; armadas; BBQ grills; picnic tables; restrooms; walking and hiking trails; baseball, soccer and softball fields; basketball hoops; volleyball courts; skatepark; swimming pool)
- Fain Memorial Chapel (at Fain Park)
- Yavapai County Fairgrounds/Yavapai Downs (horse racing; monster truck relays, dirt bike races; rock concerts, Halloween festival)
- 4H Activities
- Fishing, golfing, hiking
- Phippin Art Museum
- Yavapai College
- Bronzesmith
- Quilter's Dream
- Hull Clayworks
- Harkins Theatre
- The Barlow-Massick "Castle on the Creek," historic 1890 home
- Civic Center, including public library, town offices, and plaza
- Open Spaces—from Glassford Hill to nearby Bradshaw Mountains
- ***Programs/Events Ongoing***
- Prescott Valley Art Guild
- Boys and Girls Club
- To PV Parks and Recreation
- Service club activities, from pancake breakfasts to food drives
- Historical Society, active members, offers Gold Fever Days

- Outreach through Prescott Fine Arts Association, Arizona Classic Theatre
- Bradshaw Mountain High School Choir

### *Festivals*

#### *Chamber of Commerce*

- Festival of Lights/Night Light Parade
- Valley of Lights, in which local businesses produce exciting, lighted displays at a drive-thru location
- Prescott Valley Days, a carnival and family activities
- Fourth of July Celebration

#### *Towns sponsored events*

- World Arts Festival
- Cinco de Mayo
- Free summer concerts
- Gold Fever Day (Prescott Valley Historical Society)

### *People*

- Prescott Valley Arts and Culture Commission board members
- Prescott Jazz Society and Milt Cannon, musician
- Clyde Neville, director and actor
- Colleen Morris, high school student who is creating ceramic tiles to commemorate Prescott Valley historic events
- Gene Ulibarri, musician
- Actors, musicians

## *COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS*

### *What partners exist in the community to foster arts and culture?*

- Town Council and town staff
- Yavapai College
- Schools and school district
- Prescott Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Prescott Valley Economic Development Foundation
- Arizona Commission on the Arts
- Fain Family Foundation
- Interested individuals
- Media, all kinds
- Local businesses, from Ace Hardware to grocery stores
- Service clubs
- Hospital/Medical centers
- Law enforcement/Public Safety
- Churches
- Neighborhoods
- Homeowners associations
- Realtors
- Adult centers
- Touchstone, a business collaboration
- Major non-profit groups

### *What kinds of partnerships?*

- Joint programming
- Collaborative publicity
- Networking to exchange ideas, resources
- Programming and outreach
- Funding

## Prescott Valley Cultural Assessment Participants

Ms. Janne Woods  
7472 Sunrise Pl.  
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Ms. Barb Hanson  
7434 E. Frisco Pks  
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Mr. Gene Ulibarri  
1429 Shoup St.  
Prescott, AZ 86301

Mr. Joe Scott  
4500 N. Rock Ln.  
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Mr. Jerry Rito  
Lions Club  
8315 E. Manley  
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Ms. Rose Rito  
Lions Club  
8315 E. Manley  
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

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8149 E. Donna  
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## Prescott Valley Cultural Assessment Participants

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Ms. Jan Wissell  
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**APPENDIX B**

**ARTIST REGISTRY FORM**

*For Visual and Performing Artists and Groups*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What has been your visual/performing arts experience?

Do you have a degree in your arts field? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, from what school? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, what has been your training? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you charge for your services? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what is the range of your fees? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to get involved in the arts community?

\_\_\_\_\_ Exhibits \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer/administrative \_\_\_\_\_ As an arts aide in schools

\_\_\_\_\_ Organizer \_\_\_\_\_ Provide workshops in your art form

Please list up to three references:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:**