



For immediate release

MESA GOING LEANER AND GREENER TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

(MESA, Ariz.) – Mesa travel and tourism partners are doing their part to help the environment and make the city a healthier place for residents and visitors. Efforts put forth by eco-friendly hotels, restaurants and attractions are making it easier for you to reduce your carbon footprint, while enjoying all that the Sonoran Desert has to offer.

LEAVE YOUR TOWEL ON THE FLOOR AND SO MUCH MORE

Phoenix Marriott Mesa is working to protect the environment as well as improve the wellbeing of its guests and the surrounding community by practicing more eco-friendly operating procedures. Some of the programs Marriott has implemented include low water maintenance landscaping, water conservation, improved heating and cooling systems to conserve energy, and a linens changed on request system. Guests of the Phoenix Marriott Mesa can also help reduce their carbon footprint by making a contribution to the Brazilian rainforest. When booking a room, guests can donate \$10 or \$1 for 10 days to offset the carbon generated during a hotel stay.

CONSERVATION ON THE MENU

Mesa is home to Arizona's first organic pizza franchise. Recognized as the pioneer in environmentally-friendly restaurant service, **Pizza Fusion** is the World's first restaurant chain to adopt **organic restaurant and LEED certification**. Pizza Fusion's unique oval sized gourmet pizzas are not the only thing that sets them apart from your local pizzeria; it's the fact that everything they serve is 100% organic. Patrons have the option to build their own pizza or order a one of the specialty pies on the menu including the Seattle, topped with freshly chopped plum tomatoes, red onions, fresh basil, garlic, balsamic vinegar and olive oil accented with a light amount of mozzarella and parmesan cheeses; or the Shrimp & Pesto, topped with wild caught Key West shrimp, pesto sauce, parmesan, light mozzarella, and oregano. The menu also includes gluten-free pizza and vegan and vegetarian options. The restaurant also serves up other healthful food options such as sandwiches, salads and vegan gluten-free brownies. Besides serving up organic and delicious food, Pizza Fusion takes it to a whole new level by practicing an entirely green existence. Pizza Fusion gained their LEED certification by designing, constructing and operating their restaurant in order to reduce their negative environmental impact and improve the health and well-being of their customers and the surrounding community. Some of the core practices Pizza Fusion upholds include using hybrid delivery cars, giving discounts to customers who return their used pizza boxes for recycling, and serving food in containers made from 100% corn starch instead of plastic.

FROM THE GARDEN TO THE TABLE

Visitors to Mesa can roll up their sleeves and get a taste of life on the farm. At **Superstition Farms** in east Mesa, guests can enjoy public tours aimed at demonstrating daily life on this working fourth generation "agritourist" dairy farm. In addition to learning how farmers work to be environmentally conscious, guests also discover the dedication taken to the care, comfort, and health of every animal. Also on site is a petting zoo, Milk Bar, and the Mooster's Moo-tique. Locals and residents on extended stays can participate in the **Organic Fruit & Veggie Buying Club** at Superstition Farms. The program allows guests to purchase full or half-baskets of fresh produce every other week directly from the farm. The basket's yield depends on the season and includes a variety of both fruits and vegetables. In addition, members of the club can purchase farm fresh eggs, butter, milk, cheeses, spices, pasta & more organic goods from local purveyors. Currently, Superstition Farms is working with city officials and a local non-profit agency, Everlasting Marks, on securing an **Earthship Biotechture**. The structure will be built on the farm and teach those involved in Everlasting Marks how to build sustainable living structures so they can provide such structures and share their skills with third-world countries. Made from recycled tires, bottles, cans and other items – when complete, the structure will be powered entirely by solar energy and will reuse and recycle water. After the training build is complete, Superstition Farms will have an educational facility to teach visitors about conservation and sustainable living.

Just down the road in Queen Creek, guests can make reservations for an exquisite dining experience at **Schnepf Farms**, a fourth generation family farm and the largest organic peach grower in the Arizona. Schnepf Farms hosts their new **Dinners Down the Orchard** program in the "middle of our peach orchard" on their 300 acre farm. Offered only four times a year, each one is hosted by a notable Valley chef and features the culinary bounty of the season. Past chefs have included Iron Chef Beau MacMillan from elements at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain, Eddie Matney from Scottsdale's Eddie's House restaurant, Robert McGrath, and Matt Carter from Zinc Bistro in north Scottsdale. Dinners are farm casual and include numerous courses served under the stars. And, nine months of the year, Schnepf Farms offers a **u-pick program** where visitors and residents are invited to pick from their crop – including peaches, apricots, plums, apples and sweet corn.

Just east of Mesa is the **Queen Creek Olive Mill** - Arizona's only family-owned and operated working olive mill and farm. Here, Arizona olives are grown and pressed for the production of high quality extra virgin olive oil. Visitors to the mill can take a tour where they will learn about the different varieties of olives grown around the world and the specific types grown in Arizona. While most wouldn't think of Arizona as a prime location for olive production, unlike most olive growing regions of the world, the state does not have a problem with the olive fly due to the extreme heat during the growing season so the mill has the luxury of not using pesticides or mold inhibitors in their grove, leaving absolutely no lingering pesticide or residue of any kind on their olives. When prime picking season takes place, their olives are harvested by hand and gentle release methods. Grown at the base of the **San Tan Mountains**, an area known for its fertile soil, this flood plain region is famous for its high quality fruits and vegetables. The combination of long sunny days and cool desert nights provide the ideal growing conditions for the trees. The mill uses a two-phase process to gently extract cold pressed extra virgin olive oil from the hand-picked olives adding their own unique characteristics to produce their signature blends. After a tour and complimentary tasting of oils, olives and tapenades, guests are invited to dine at **del Piero** – the mill's Tuscan-inspired eatery featuring fresh gourmet sandwiches, panini's as well as soups, salads, gelato and espresso. When the weather is ideal, guests can dine in the olive grove.

PESTICIDE FREE PRACTICES

Visitors to Mesa's **Orange Patch** citrus groves will get the rewarding experience of picking their own fresh tree-ripened citrus right off the branch. Comprised of **over 200 acres** of sweet smelling citrus trees, Orange Patch is **free of harmful pesticides and insecticides** so customers get only the freshest fruit. Out-of-towners have the option to ship their fruit home. Orange Patch also sells fresh dates, dried fruit, candies, their own fresh roasted nuts, orange juice made fresh daily, ice cream and other Arizona gifts. With over 20 years of exceptional service, Orange Patch keeps visitors coming back for more.

Environmentally friendly lawn mowers, about **70 contracted goats**, are being used in Mesa in a new form of weed control at water reclamation plants. The goats are on a six-month contract from **Arizona Herdsman Eco Goats** and are keeping the city from having to spend tens of thousands of dollars on machine and fuel costs, future repairs to the retention ponds due to weeds, and labor costs.

WATER IN THE DESERT

South of Mesa, the town of Gilbert has instituted an innovative and unique way to combine water resource development with open space, educational and recreational opportunities. Gilbert's **Riparian Preserve** was established as a means for the town to reuse 100% of its effluent water in an environmentally friendly way. Of the 110 acres, 70 acres make up the seven water recharge basins that are filled on a rotating basis with treated effluent and allowed to percolate into the aquifer where it is stored for future use. One of the ponds has a unique distribution stream that mimics the action of an ephemeral desert stream. An additional lake is filled with reclaimed water, and is designated as an **urban fishing** resource through the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The water recycling system used here creates the opportunity for habitats for many kinds of animal and plant life that may not be found in other areas of the desert. The preserve is organized into various vegetative zones ranging from marshlands to upland vegetation areas. Park visitors can experience the lake close up from the **floating boardwalk**, wind their way through the park's 4.5 miles of trails, or gaze through the telescope at the state-of-the-art **observatory**.

Golf courses in Arizona are "green" in more ways than you think. Conservation and efficient use of water is a major concern for golf courses in Arizona's dry climate. Through the use of reclaimed water, golf courses in Arizona account for just **two percent** of the state's annual water consumption. Golf courses also give our city clean air. Turf grass on Arizona golf courses produces enough oxygen annually to support 2,143,082 people, helping to **improve air quality**.