



For immediate release

THE METRO COMES TO MESA: IT ALL STARTS HERE! *Light Rail Links Valley To Arizona's 3rd Largest City* www.VisitMesa.com

From the Economic Reporter, a quarterly newsletter produced by City of Mesa's Office of Economic Development
2009 (MESA, Ariz.) – Last month marked the grand opening of the Main and Sycamore Light Rail station in Mesa. The Light Rail grand opening signaled a “win” for regional planners and economic development officials who use examples such as Portland, Denver, San Francisco and Boston to show the effectiveness of mass transit and transit-oriented development. For the purpose of economic development, Metro's Light Rail brings something more than a popular mode of transportation along West Main Street... it brings opportunity. Proponents of light rail argue that rail transit increases community well-being by creating jobs, boosting economic development and property values, and reducing pollution and traffic congestion - at the same time providing drivers with an economical alternative to the automobile. Below are a few examples of the “opportunity” Light Rail has brought to other communities around the country:

- In Charlotte, transit officials claim that more than \$291 million in new development has been built near stations on a new 10-mile rail line. They say an additional \$1.6 billion has been announced for the rail corridor.
- In Denver, transit officials say 8.4 million square feet of new retail, office and government space has been built along its existing 35-mile rail network. In addition, there have been 11,000 residential units built near the rail line.
- In Dallas, a 2005 study showed that \$3.3 billion in new real estate investment was made or planned near light-rail stations from 1999 to 2005.

So what will Mesa's Light Rail corridor look like in five, ten or even twenty years? It's tough to say, but if we use nationwide examples as a barometer, we can anticipate plenty of development activity along the rail line. In response to a nationwide trend of redevelopment in downtown districts; Mesa will look to leverage the Light Rail for urban and transit-oriented development. The hope is to rejuvenate the city center by bringing more people, entertainment, jobs and culture to Downtown Mesa and along West Main street. Using the development results from the Denver, Dallas and Charlotte Light Rail lines; it's encouraging to think of the possibilities in West Mesa, and downtown.

Nearby Businesses, Attractions & Restaurants to Mesa's Light Rail Station:

- Mesa Riverview:** 1.8 miles, Mesa's newest 250-acre large-scale retail and tourism development boasting more than 1.3 million square feet of retail space including Arizona's only Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World
- Mekong Plaza:** 0.4 miles, premier Asian market featuring a variety of restaurants and shops
- Mesa Arts Center:** 2.2 miles, seven-acre performing arts, visual arts, and arts education facility, the largest and most comprehensive arts center in the state of Arizona
- Downtown Mesa:** 2.1 miles, a thriving hub of business, government, culture, arts, recreation and entertainment
- Arizona Museum of Natural History:** 2.2 miles, leading museum of natural and cultural history, featuring the largest display of dinosaur fossils in Arizona
- Hyatt Place at Mesa Riverview:** 2.3 miles, brand new four-story, 150-room hotel opening in April
- Fiesta Mall:** 2.5 miles, home to more than 140 specialty shops and eateries
- Phoenix Marriott Mesa Hotel & Mesa Convention Center:** 2.1 miles, offering complimentary shuttle service upon request from Sycamore Station

What others have to say: <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2009/03/26/20090326mr-lightrail0327.html>
<http://www.azcentral.com/community/mesa/articles/2009/03/26/20090326metro-extend0326.html>
<http://www.mesa-goodlife.com/ValleyMetroRail.html>

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

Michelle Streeter, Director of Public Relations
Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau
Direct: 480-682-3638 Toll-free: 800-283-6372 x345
E-mail: Michelle@VisitMesa.com

About the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau:

The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau is responsible for marketing Mesa, Arizona as a leading vacation, small meeting and sports travel destination to regional and national target audiences, including travel agents and group tour operators, meeting planners, leisure visitors and media.

Editor's Note: Readers can request a complimentary 2009 Official Mesa Arizona Visitors Guide at VisitMesa.com or by calling 800-283-6372.

Download Images: High-resolution images for editorial use are available for download at VisitMesa.com. Click on "Photo/Video Tour" and follow prompts. Images are offered in nine categories. You must complete a registration form to receive images. All requests are processed upon receipt during regular business hours.