

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Sun City DEVCO Model #1

other names/site number Del Webb Sun Cities Museum

### 2. Location

street & number 10801 W. Oakmont Drive

city or town Sun City

state Arizona code AZ county Maricopa code 013 zip code 85351

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this    nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national       statewide         local

James W. Garrison ARSHPO 29 DECEMBER 2014  
Signature of certifying official/Title      Date  
AZ STATE PARKS / SHPO  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official      Date

Title      State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 2/24/15  
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement/Ranch Style  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete  
 walls: Concrete  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof: Asphalt  
 other: Wood  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The town of Sun City, Arizona is located roughly fifteen miles to the northwest of the city of Phoenix along Grand Avenue, also known as United States Highway (US) 60. The community, which was built by the Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO) between 1959–1960 as a "self-contained" retirement community (Findlay 1992), includes curvilinear streets, open green space, artificial ponds, golf courses, and community centers with limited commercial development. Homes within the development are built of masonry in the Ranch architectural style. The single family dwelling at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive is located within the initial plat for Sun City, known as Newlife Unit 1, and is the first of five model homes built within the development along Oakmont Drive. The home, which now houses the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, is adjacent to Sun City's first recreation center and faces the rear an early commercial strip mall which once housed the community's first grocery store; a golf course is located to the rear of the building. This one-story, two bedroom Ranch style home is the most modest in size of the five models with just under 1,000 square feet; however, the single car carport under the extended roofline gives the home a more expansive feel. Although originally covered in grass, the home's lawn has been converted to desert landscaping, as have the lawns of the adjacent Oakland Recreation Center and many of the neighboring dwellings.

### Narrative Description

Constructed in 1959, the single family dwelling at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive was the first of five initial model homes built within the community of Sun City (see Figure 1). The Arizona contracting company of DEVCO, formed by contractor Del E. Webb and rancher and developer James Boswell, contracted Phoenix-based architects and brothers, Charles and Arthur Schreiber to design the initial models for the development. Each of the five models was designed in the Ranch architectural style, consisted of a single story, and had three different elevations to choose from. Depending on the elevation chosen, the low-pitched roofs of the homes varied between side-gabled, cross-gabled, or gabled-on-hip. The models ranged in size from 947 square feet to 1,219 square feet and were either L-shaped or rectangular-shaped in plan. Due to their modest square footage, the homes were not the "rambling" ranches typical of the California Ranch style; however, they did incorporate exterior decorative elements often associated with this style, such as scrolled fascia, board and batten and brick combinations, diamond-paned and large fixed pane picture windows, pediments over porch entries, and portico style porch posts and lanais on the back patios. Additionally, all of the homes featured attached single car carports under a continuous roofline.

10801 W. Oakmont Drive is a rectangular plan, Ranch style single family dwelling originally known as the "Kentworth" model (see Figure 2). The roof form is gable-on-hip, with long overhanging eaves. The two bedroom, one bath home includes a one-car carport housed under an extending roofline as well as a small 8-foot-long by 8-foot-wide storage unit to the rear of the carport. A small rectangular roof line extension at the front of the home creates a covered porch entry. The concrete block walls are painted and the façade is punctuated by two windows. The front bedroom has a diamond pane window and the front living area has a large, nearly floor to ceiling, three-part picture window. Decorative scrollwork is found around the front bedroom window as well as the porch fascia and posts. Due to limited change of ownership, the home has changed very little since its construction in 1959. Modifications include enclosure of the original porch to the rear of the residence, and replacement of the diamond-paned bedroom window with a similar style vinyl window. All of the interior finishes are original. Since 1989, the dwelling has served as the headquarters for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, which has sought to preserve the original appearance of the building; it currently houses the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

This building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its setting has been impacted by additions to the adjacent Oakmont Recreation Center and the installation of paving between the recreation center and the home, which originally functioned as open space. However, these changes in setting are negligible as the dwelling is still located along a residential street, backs onto the community's original golf course, and faces the rear of an early strip commercial center.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1959 - 1960

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Charles and Arthur Schreiber (Architects)

Del Webb (Builder)

**Period of Significance (justification)**

1959 is the build date for the building at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive as one of five original models used to promote the 1959-1960 development of Sun City AZ.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The building at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of *Social History* as an intact example of one of five original models used to promote the 1959–1960 development of Sun City, the nation's first "active adult" retirement community. The community was envisioned by Del E. Webb Construction Company, which was founded by American real estate developer Del E. Webb in 1928 as one of only two age-segregated neighborhoods established in Maricopa County, Arizona during the post-World War II era. The single family dwelling, which has been set aside for preservation by the community, represents the smallest and most modest home offered for sale in Sun City, which the Del Webb Development Company (DEVCO) marketed as "America's most completely planned, completely different community for active retirement" (Del Webb Development Company 1960). The original five models were offered with three different elevations creating options for external appearances. This property, of the model series "H-1" was referred to by its elevation name—the "Kentworth." The 947 square foot, Ranch style home cost \$8,500 at the community's grand opening on January 1, 1960, as compared to the largest single family dwelling, the "H-5" model with the "Pickford" elevation, which cost \$11,750 and measured 1,219 square feet. Regardless of their size, all five of the model homes were designed by Phoenix architects Charles and Arthur Schreiber to be affordable and easy for residents to maintain. The H-1 Kentworth model, specifically, continued to be constructed until 1963. However, iterations of the small "H" series home continued to be constructed until 1973, even as other model offerings expanded to 2,500 feet. The H-1, in subsequent decades known as the H-11, H-31, H-41, H-51, H-61 and H-71, remained a modest two-bedroom home, never exceeding 1,100 square feet, suggesting that the popularity of the community for some residents had less to do with home size and more to do the types of amenities offered and the "active" lifestyle they promoted. With the exception of an enclosed rear porch, which currently functions as an administrative and archival area, the interior floorplan of the 10801 W. Oakmont Drive remains unaltered. It also retains many of its original fixtures and has been furnished with period-appropriate furnishings. Additionally, the exterior of the home remains largely unaltered. As such, the building at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive is a well-preserved tangible reminder of what was then a novel concept of middle-class "resort" retirement living pioneered by DEVCO.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The building at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive is significant at the state level, in the area of *Social History* for its role in the promotion of Sun City, Arizona, a residential development which pioneered the concept of an active retirement lifestyle in an age-segregated community. The building was one of five models designed and constructed by Phoenix architects Charles and Arthur Schreiber in 1959 for the ground-breaking, self-contained "new-town." Although not the first age-restricted community in Arizona, Sun City was unique in that it was the first retirement community in the nation to offer complete infrastructure at the outset of development, such as paved streets, curbs, and sidewalks, as well as recreation facilities (Findlay 1992) (see Figure 3). Much of DEVCO's success was attributed to their aggressive marketing research campaign, in which they interviewed retirees living in age-restricted communities in several cities in Florida and Youngstown, Arizona, to determine what retirees liked or disliked about their current neighborhoods (Sturgeon 1999). From these interviews, DEVCO executive Tom Breen concluded that, "most senior citizens" desired to live in "a true retirement community, restricted to folks in their own age bracket" (Sturgeon 1999:84). He further hypothesized that retirees wanted "modest but comfortable homes, with shopping and medical facilities" nearby (Sturgeon 1999:84).

As an early promotional brochure for Sun City attests, the primary purpose of the DEVCO development was to promote an "active new way-of-life" in a "completely planned, completely different community for active retirement" (DEVCO 1960). According to Breen, the initial design of Sun City was "based on three things: activity, economy, and individuality" (Collins 2010:15). The notion that senior citizens could live an active lifestyle was a radical concept for the time, and formed the basis of DEVCO's aggressive marketing campaign which continued through the late 1970s. By opening day, DEVCO had completed a 9-hole golf course, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a community center, shuffleboard and horseshoe courts, croquet and archery areas, a creative activity center, and a commercial shopping center (Sturgeon 1999:87).

In keeping with the theme of economy, the five original models constructed in Sun City were meant to be moderately priced. The models ranged from the smallest of which 10801 W. Oakmont Drive is an example at 947 square feet for the cost of \$8,500 to 1,219 square feet priced at \$11,750. The median price for homes in the state of Arizona in 1960 was

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\$11,100 putting these homes well within the reach of a middle class demographic and achieving the vision of affordability put forth by Tom Breen (U.S. Census 1960). The building was the most economical of the five original models and was used to successfully market a lifestyle that would afford retirees with the full amenities of a resort-style community for the cost of a modest, Ranch-style dwelling. Early marketing continually emphasized residents' independence in selecting from multiple activities within the community while having a low-cost, low-maintenance home. According to Breen, recreational facilities within Sun City also offered an economic incentive to residents, as membership and use of the facilities cost residents \$12.00 a year, and their maintenance and upkeep was community-supported (Sturgeon 1992:79).

The master plan for Sun City also called for management of the community to be taken over by the residents themselves following DEVCO's initial build-out, which further enforced Breen's concept of individuality. DEVCO also worked to establish initial ties within the community by organizing clubs for people with like interests. Within two years of the development's opening, approximately 90 clubs and organizations had been founded with focuses ranging from recreation to civic engagement. Marketing materials also touted the concept of independence as a selling point for the self-contained community. A 1960 brochure entitled "Active Living for America's Senior Citizens" stated Sun City allowed for a "new way-of-life where men and women can do exactly what they want in the company of contemporaries who share their interests and their dreams" (DEVCO 1960). A 1962 article in *Time* magazine further noted the appeal of this lifestyle stating that, "underlying it all is the oldsters' feeling that Sun City is a town that is of their own to shape and enjoy" (*Time* 1962:48).

Although DEVCO had anticipated that most of the homes would be purchased by "middle class" buyers, the extensive amenities offered by the development and the "active lifestyle" they promoted also attracted wealthier individuals of the upper middle class. This is reflected in early statistics which demonstrate that while Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and conventional financing was available to prospective homeowners, approximately 70 percent of Sun City homeowners purchased their properties in cash (Meeker 1981). Additionally, records kept by DEVCO in the 1960s suggest that at \$6,850 the mean income for Sun City residents was two to three times higher than the median income for retired households across the nation (\$3,671), as well as in Arizona (\$2,472) (Sturgeon 1992:173). According to the 1962 *Time* magazine article, those buying homes in Sun City "were usually men from solid substance — former engineers, successful salesmen, foremen, dentists, small businessmen, school teachers — with money in the bank, often as a result of selling the house back home" (*Time* 1962:48).

To accommodate this unanticipated class of buyer, DEVCO added three additional models shortly after the community's grand opening in 1960. These models, known as the H-6, H-7, and H-8, were larger than the five original model homes and measured 1,411 square feet, 1,425 square feet, and 1,610 square feet, respectively. The H-6 and H-8 models had three bedrooms and two bathrooms which extended the offerings of the original five models which had only included one three bedroom home (Meeker 1981). Historian Melanie Sturgeon also notes that a number of early residents modified their homes to provide additional living space through rear patio enclosures (Sturgeon 1992:103). Despite these larger offerings, however, the H-1 series remained popular representing 159 of the 619 homes sold between January and November of 1960, or roughly 25 percent. The H-1 continued to be offered through March of 1962, at which time the new "teen series" of models were developed (Meeker 1981). In the teen series, the H-1 was renamed the H-11 and was expanded to include 1,014 square feet. The floor plan was virtually identical, however, with two bedrooms, one bathroom, a dining area, kitchen, living area, and carport storage (Meeker 1981). A similar two bedroom, one bathroom home was carried on through subsequent series as the H-31, H-41, H-61, and H-71 until 1971. These models fluctuated in size but never exceeded 1,100 square feet (Meeker 1981).

By 1971, DEVCO offered its first 2,500 square foot model home in Sun City, which was purchased by more than 7,000 prospective residents in the first three years following its initial offering (Meeker 1981:18–19). More broadly, home designs and layouts between 1960 and 1971 had evolved to include new living areas such as Arizona rooms, dressing rooms, breakfast spaces, and foyers. In a clear shift in housing preference, DEVCO ultimately eliminated the small two bedroom, one bathroom home H series from its offerings in 1974. By this time, the community had grown to more than 30,000 residents living in roughly 16,000 homes (see Figure 4) (Meeker 1981).

Today, Sun City has a population of 38,500 residents, and the community boasts 8 golf courses, 7 recreational centers, 3 country clubs, a visitor center, a lake for boating and fishing, 30 religious congregations, a library, numerous life care, retirement, and nursing complexes, and more than a dozen shopping centers (Sun City Visitors Center n.d.). Sun City continues to function as a retirement community, requiring that the homes be occupied full-time by at least one person

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over 55 years of age. Additionally, the community does not allow persons under the age of 19 to reside there (Sun City Visitors Center n.d.).

In the period of the H-1 model's construction, in the New Life Unit 1 and Sun City 1 plats, between December 1959 and March 1962, DEVCO constructed a total of 910 homes. These homes included models H-1 to H-18. Of these 910 homes, 245, or 27 percent were H-1 model homes. Of these 245 homes, which consisted of the "Meadowgrove," "Montaire," and "Kentworth" elevations, 139 were constructed in the Kentworth elevation, indicating the popularity of the aesthetic of this elevation (see Figure 2). Analysis of modern aerial photography suggests that many of the H-1 model homes constructed within these plats, have been modified by rear and side additions. Thus the single family dwelling at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive is a rare, early reminder of Sun City's humble origins, prior to it becoming the nation's first, largest, and most successful planned retirement community.

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#### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Residential development in the United States, leading up to World War II (WWII), consisted predominantly of either dense attached or multi-family dwellings in urban areas, or single family dwellings platted near urban centers accessed by public transportation. After WWII, however, the development of residential housing in America shifted dramatically as a rising middle class population with increasing access to automobiles sought to buy single family residences away from urban population centers. This trend became particularly true for the generation of younger adults who married after the war and sought to raise families in "suburbia." Many adults of retirement age, however, chose to remain in more urban areas. This was a dramatic shift from a half century before when in 1900 it was estimated that 60 percent of households were comprised of three generations; this number dropped to just 16 percent of households by 1950 (Findlay 1992). A correlating factor in this shift was Social Security legislation passed during the Great Depression which allowed senior citizens to have a more economically stable retirement and continue to live on their own (Sturgeon 1992).

As early as 1950, the director of the Florida State Improvement Commission, Walter E. Keyes, advocated for the development of moderately priced communities for retirees comprised of both single and multiple-family dwellings including large communal style dormitories oriented around a community center (Sturgeon 1992). Keyes sought Union and corporate support for the development of these lower income communities but they showed little interest in his endeavor. Real estate developers did see a new potential market for those who were retiring with pensions and social security income, however, and soon retirement communities ranging from "haphazard and unplanned developments to well-designed ones" were being constructed throughout Florida (Sturgeon 1992:54). None of these communities were age-restricted and those that were "well-designed" catered predominantly to an affluent clientele (Sturgeon 1992).

In Arizona, the development of Sun City was preceded by the community of Youngtown, which was initially envisioned by realtor Ben Schleifer (also known as "Big Ben") in 1947. In 1954, Schleifer recruited ranch owner Frances Greer and ranch manager Elmer Johns and formed the Youngtown Development Company with the goal of turning Greer's ranch into an active retirement community. With a \$48,000 investment, the company platted 128 lots and constructed 125 homes on Greer's 320-acre ranch parcel located approximately 15 miles northwest of Phoenix. However, initial home sales were slow and the company's lack of capital prohibited them from providing basic infrastructure such as paved roads and sufficient electricity. The success of the community grew, however, following the 1956 Housing Act which allowed persons over the age of 62 to qualify for Federal Housing Authority (FHA) mortgage insurance making financing more feasible. Additionally, in 1957 Youngtown was featured on Dave Garroway's television show *Wide Wide World*, which turned the national spotlight on the community (Sturgeon 1992). In 1960, the townsite was incorporated and claimed the title of the "first-age restricted community in the country" (*Arizona Republic*, 4 June 1964). As historian Judith Ann Trolander recently noted, however, Youngtown's major difference from other post-WWII era, age-restricted communities (including Sun City) was its "relative lack of recreation facilities" (Trolander 2011:43).

Although DEVCO's initial design concept for Sun City can primarily be attributed to corporate executive Tom Breen, its execution would not have been successful without the company's founder and contractor, Del Eugene Webb, who had considerable prior experience in the construction industry. Webb's career began in Arizona in the 1930s when he was working as a carpenter on the construction of a Phoenix grocery store. During construction of the building, the contractor quit suddenly and the store's owner, A. J. Bayless, offered Webb the opportunity to finish its construction. The success of this project launched his career in the construction business and he continued building stores for Bayless. With the onset of WWII, Webb was awarded a number of government contracts including a \$3,000,000 contract for expansion of the

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military base at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, as well as one for the construction of a Japanese internment camp at Poston, Arizona. While working in Poston, Webb gained the experience of developing the complete infrastructure for a community; his contract for the internment camp also included the construction of roads, schools, and community facilities for the internees. Although the legitimacy of the Japanese interment was questioned by many Americans after the war, Webb was proud of his camp at Poston and considered it a symbol of his patriotism (Trolander 2011).

In 1948, Webb built his first residential subdivision known as Pueblo Gardens on a 1,500-acre parcel outside of Tucson. It was here that he was able to refine his skills in community planning and design as well as the use of mass production techniques for housing construction. According to historian Melanie Sturgeon (1992:75), "Webb built the houses, put in the water and sewage systems, and built shopping facilities" for the community's residents. The success of Pueblo Gardens eventually led to a contract with the Magma Copper Company in 1953 for the construction of an employee housing community, which Webb later named San Manuel. Webb's master plan for the community, which included housing, shopping, schools, parks, and recreational facilities, was his most ambitious project and its success fueled the company to explore additional opportunities in the residential housing market. One of these opportunities promoted by company vice president Tom Breen was the creation of insular, age-restricted housing communities that specifically catered to America's burgeoning population of middle-class retirees.

Although Webb was initially skeptical of Breen's idea, Breen had conducted extensive research on the concept which he ultimately used to convince the company's founder of its fail-proof success. Initially Breen turned to the advice of prominent sociologists Robert Havighurst and Eugene Friedmann who had developed an "activity theory" in relation to retirees. Havighurst and Friedmann argued that retirees needed other activities to replace what they had performed in the workforce in order to continue to feel useful and content, and that they benefited from living in an intergenerational environment versus an age-segregated one (Trolander 2011). Based on this initial research, Breen hired a consulting firm to research the viability of an elderly market and they too agreed that an age-segregated community for retirees was neither feasible nor sustainable. Lastly, Breen hired his friend Lou Silverstein to conduct personal interviews with retirees in Florida, and residents of Youngtown, who affirmed that retirees did enjoy living in communities with their peers but had been, by and large, disappointed with the promises of developers to complete amenities within their communities which were never constructed (Sturgeon 1992). As a result of these informal research efforts, Breen authored a memo to company executives entitled "Recommendations for Retirement Living" which outlined his vision of an age-restricted community of moderately-priced Ranch style homes with recreational amenities including golf courses, swimming pools, and recreation centers. Both Breen and Webb believed, however, that in order to keep costs low the community would need to be developed in an area where land was both cheap and widely available.

In 1959, the Del E. Webb Construction Company ran an advertisement in a local Phoenix newspaper stating that they were interested in purchasing land. Rancher Jim Boswell responded to the advertisement and offered L. C. Jacobson, Webb's partner, the option of buying one, or both, of his 10,000 parcels of land in Marinette. That year, Boswell and Webb formed an agreement, and ultimately a partnership, known as DEVCO which allowed Webb to purchase the parcels and lease those areas not under development back to Boswell. Boswell would be able to continue cotton farming until such a time when the parcels would be ready for residential development. This arrangement allowed Webb and Boswell to offset some of the development costs and it also gave Webb the benefit of added capital investment, as each partner invested roughly \$650,000 to create the initial infrastructure for the community (Collins 2010).

DEVCO's proposed plan for the initial New Life Unit 1 tract was based heavily on standards and basic design principles institutionalized by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the late 1930s. Created under the National Housing Act of 1934, the FHA was one of several agencies established in the mid-twentieth century to make home ownership possible for low- to moderate-income families, and particularly the six million veterans returning from service in WWII (Ames and McClelland 2002:65). The program also stimulated private investment in the home building industry by providing federal insurance for privately-financed housing subdivisions and rental housing, which allowed for the growth of merchant builders like the Dell E. Webb Construction Company and DEVCO after WWII (Ames and McClelland 2002). Once the 1956 Housing Act allowed persons over the age of 62 to qualify for FHA mortgage insurance, Del Webb's DEVCO subsidiary focused on incorporating FHA standards to its proposed retirement subdivision to allow buyers additional financing opportunities.

Between 1936 and 1940, the FHA drafted housing standards and basic design principles for new subdivisions which included seven minimum requirements as well as a set of "desirable standards" or additional factors that although not

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strict requirements, influenced the approval of a project (Ames and McClelland 2002:48). The requirements focused on project setting, community accessibility, roadway improvements and utility installation, deed restrictions, compliance with zoning and subdivision regulations, and the financial surety of the contractor. The standards pertained mostly to the design and physical layout of the subdivisions and advocated for the use of curvilinear design plans that adhered to the natural environment and incorporated features that added attractiveness to the communities to make them desirable places to live (Ames and McClelland 2002:48). Large-scale production, streamlined assembly methods, and the use of prefabricated materials for home construction were encouraged by FHA, which enabled crews to work efficiently and quickly while keeping the costs of the finished homes low (Ames and McClelland 2002:66).

Specifically, the Sun City plan called for a curvilinear subdivision to be platted to the south of the Phoenix to Wickenburg Highway, also known as Grand Avenue. The layout of the residential streets curved along the golf course fairways and sought to discourage through-traffic for those not affiliated with the development. The subdivision's first plat—New Life Unit 1—was recorded in September 1959 and included 585 residential lots. The residential lots were either 100 feet long by 60 feet wide for homes with one-car carports, or 100 feet long by 70 feet wide for homes with double carports (Meeker 1981). The northern portion of the development was reserved for commercial facilities and businesses, and included lots for a shopping center, gas station, motor hotel, and restaurant. Cooperative apartments were placed to the east of the single family housing, on the opposite side of 107th Avenue, bordering the New Life Unit 1 plat (Sturgeon 1992; see Figure 3). Additional lots were reserved for a large recreation center, which would later become a distinguishing element of the community, to the east of five residential lots planned for the construction of five model homes to be offered to prospective buyers on the day of the community's grand opening (see Figure 3).

To build the five model homes within the New Life Unit 1 plat, DEVCO contracted with Phoenix architects and twin brothers Charles and Arthur Schreiber. Although educated in Illinois, the Schreiber brothers came to Arizona and organized an architectural firm in Phoenix in 1938 (American Institute of Architects 1956). The Schreibers became respected residential architects in the post-war era known for their designs for single family homes within subdivisions. A search of the local Phoenix newspaper, the *Arizona Republic*, noted the firm as involved in designing homes for 11 different subdivisions in the Phoenix area between 1955 and 1963. The five model homes they designed in Sun City, which ranged from the 947 square feet, two bedroom, one bathroom H-1, to the 1,219 square feet, three bedroom, two bathroom H-5, were all constructed of concrete block. The homes included standard building materials including aluminum-framed windows, ceramic tile, asphalt shingle roofing, wood trim, and porcelain sinks and tubs which could be easily replicated in each new home constructed (Sturgeon 1992). The standardization of materials kept the cost of the homes low and allowed purchasers to obtain FHA insured loans.

Following completion of the five model homes in 1960, DEVCO began an extensive marketing campaign to sell the concept of "active retirement" to senior citizens across the country. The company hired the Phoenix based advertising firm of Garland Advertisement to create different types of marketing materials to not only sell the community, but also sell the idea of an "active" lifestyle to retirees. As Melanie Sturgeon (1992:86) humorously states in her thesis on Sun City, "in essence, advertising took grandpa out of the rocking chair and put him on the golf course" (see Figure 5). The agency's campaign also capitalized on the extensive research done by Breen, boasting that the development had been specifically designed to cater to the well-researched wants and needs of retirees. The homes were touted as economical, yet well-appointed, and maintenance free. With many homes, including the five model homes, backing the golf course, the completed community provided a country club lifestyle for a middle class demographic.

Interestingly, DEVCO had no idea how successful their marketing efforts would be. While DEVCO officials expected several thousand people to come to the opening weekend of January 1, 1960, it is estimated that nearly 100,000 people attended the community's grand opening, with cars lining US route 60 for miles just for the opportunity to visit (Sturgeon 1992) (see Figures 3 and 6). To accommodate the crowds of interested buyers, DEVCO set up a small shed building as the sales office and within the first three days, more than 250 interested parties had put down a \$500 deposit to purchase lots and homes within the community (Findlay 1992; Meeker 1981). By the end of January, another 150 homes were sold. Author John Findlay noted that, "with orders in hand, DEVCO set about building the first homes," with "pioneers" moving in during spring and summer months (Findlay 1992:174).

With construction well under way on the development's first 500 homes, DEVCO officials ran a naming contest for the community with the grand prize of a golf course lot home for the winning submission. Webb himself chose the winning name, "Sun City," of which there had been three entries. The contest was another successful marketing ploy to draw both

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local and nationwide attention to the development, while at the same time, making potential residents feel as though they had an individual stake in the community.

In May 1960, DEVCO filed a second plat—Sun City 1—in homage of the community's new name. This plat, which included 671 lots, was located on the eastern side of 107th Avenue and incorporated the original cooperative apartments constructed in 1959. With this new plat, DEVCO expanded its multi-family dwelling offerings to include garden apartments, although the plat predominantly consisted of lots of single family residences (Meeker 1981). The plat also mimicked the curvilinear and serpentine street layout of the New Life 1 plat, with many of the lots bordering the golf course. By the end of 1960, DEVCO had constructed 1,050 homes within the Sun City 1 plat, increasing the population of the overall community to 1,890 (Meeker 1981).

Transcripts of oral histories conducted with Sun City developers and community's earliest residents provide insight on the types of people who were initially attracted to the development and the lifestyles that they pursued. These transcripts, which are on file at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, suggest that a large percentage of the residents migrated to Sun City from other states, such as Ohio, Illinois, and Minnesota and often noted that Arizona's climate was the primary incentive for relocating. Some of these residents also maintained a house in the state they migrated from so that they could live seasonally between their two residences. The modest costs of the early homes were enticing to some, but many more noted the appeal of the golf courses, swimming pools, and recreation centers as the reason behind their decision to purchase in Sun City. Additionally, commercial offerings located within the development gave residents the sense that they had everything they needed in a self-contained community.

Oral history transcripts also indicate that people who moved to Sun City came from a variety of employment backgrounds including small business owners, contractors, teachers, government employees, corporate officers, and professionals. A number of the residents paid for their homes in cash suggesting that the community drew people who were, if not wealthy, were at least economically stable. However, residents responded a sense that regardless of income level, people were on a level playing field as pioneers in a new community; no one was an outsider. All of the early residents interviewed discussed the intimacy of the community in its initial stages as they all sought to build relationships with new friends. Interviewee Mildred Toldrian claimed "the community spirit was something that I don't think you can understand unless you lived it because it was just fabulous" (Toldrian 1992:10). The early residents relished coming together to create new clubs and organizations, in effect creating their own active lifestyle. Interviewee Margaret Mullholland stated "we liked the active retirement. It means that you are not sitting in your four walls and grieving and feeling sorry for yourself, you get up and out of that chair and you are really just wanting to give all you can to the community" (Mullholland 1992:6).

The three main concepts of activity, economy, and individuality, emphasized at all levels of the community, set Sun City on a course of wild success. A second phase of development consequently began in 1968. DEVCO concluded its construction in 1977 with a community of some 42,000 residents (Sturgeon 1992). At this point the community maintenance and management, as originally advertised, was turned over to the residents themselves, whose belief in the importance of individuality and activity ensured the continued success of the community.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
  - previously listed in the National Register
  - previously determined eligible by the National Register
  - designated a National Historic Landmark
  - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
  - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
  - recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

- Primary location of additional data:**
- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: **Sun Cities Area Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** .18  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	12	380110	3718671	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

#### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Maricopa county parcel number 200-87-001

#### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property consists of one parcel.

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Helana Ruter  
organization Logan Simpson Design, Inc. date August 24, 2014  
street & number 51 West Third Street, Suite 450 telephone 480-967-1343  
city or town Tempe state AZ zip code 85281  
e-mail hruter@logansimpson.com

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

10801 W. Oakmont Drive  
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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: 10801 W. Oakmont Drive

City or Vicinity: Sun City

County: Maricopa

State: AZ

Photographer: Helana Ruter

Date Photographed: 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo #1 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_001)  
Front façade looking southeast

Photo #2 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_002)  
Front façade looking southwest

Photo #3 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_003)  
East façade looking southwest

Photo #4 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_004)  
Rear façade looking northeast

Photo #5 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_005)  
Rear façade looking northwest

Photo #6 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_006)  
Golf course view from rear yard looking southwest

Photo #7 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_007)  
Street View

Photo #8 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_008)  
Interior kitchen

Photo #9 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_009)  
Interior living room

Photo #10 (AZ\_Maricopa County\_10801 W Oakmont\_010)  
Interior bathroom

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County and State

**Bibliography**

American Institute of Architects. The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, 1956. Electronic document <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1039822.aspx>, accessed 27 March 2014.

Arizona Republic. "Youngtown Residents to Mark Anniversary." June 4, 1964.

Collins, Craig. *Reshaping Retirement in American Sun City, Arizona 1960-2010*. Tampa: Fairmount, LLC, 2010.

Collins, William S. *The Emerging Metropolis: Phoenix 1944-1973*. Phoenix: Arizona State Parks Board, 2005.

DEVCO. "Active Living for America's Senior Citizens." Brochure on file with the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, 1960.

Findlay, John M. *Magic Lands Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Mullholland, Margaret (1991, September 20). Oral history interview with Margaret Mullholland. Melanie Sturgeon on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association. Transcript on file at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, Sun City, Arizona.

Sturgeon, Melanie. "It's a Paradise Town": the Marketing and Development of Sun City, Arizona. Master's Thesis, Arizona State University, 1992.

Sun City Visitors Center. Sun City, Arizona: America's Favorite Active Retirement Community. Sun City: Sun City Visitors Center, n.d.

Time. "A Place in the Sun." 3 August 1962.

Toldrian, Mildred (1992, February 7). Oral history interview with Mildred Toldrian. Melanie Sturgeon on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association. Transcript on file at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, Sun City, Arizona.

Trolander, Judith Ann. *From Sun Cities to the Villages A History of Active Adult, Age-Restricted Communities*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2011.

United States Census Bureau. State and County QuickFacts – Sun City CDP, Arizona. U. S. Department of Commerce, 2010.

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Sun Cities Area Historical Society

street & number 10801 W. Oakmont Drive telephone 623-974-2568

city or town Sun City state AZ zip code 85351

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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Section number      Figures      Page      1     

1. 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, 1959
2. Floor plan 1 with the Kentworth elevation
3. Aerial original infrastructure, opening weekend 1960
4. Aerial Sun City 1972
5. Advertisement "Active Retirement is Proven Success"
6. Street view of crowds on opening weekend 10801 W. Oakmont Drive middle figure



Figure 1

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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**The Meadowgrove** \$8,500.00

Plan 1-A. 2 Bedrooms and 1 Bath. Spacious rooms, compactly designed.



**The Montaire** \$8,500.00

Plan 1-B. 2 Bedrooms and 1 Bath. Spacious rooms, compactly designed.



**The Kentworth** \$8,500.00

Plan 1-C. 2 Bedrooms and 1 Bath. Spacious rooms, compactly designed.



**Floor Plan #1**

Figure 2

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Figure 3

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Figure 4

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Figures      Page      5     

*Active*  
**RETIREMENT**  
Is a Proven Success In  
DEL WEBB'S  
**SunCity**  
A B I T O N A

...designed exclusively for  
**America's Modern Retirees**  
Upon the opening of this unique retirement park, you will find the modern Del E. Webb, created "Continental Style" and "Deluxe" and, under the leadership and guidance of the management, together we can realize a Way of Life, as never dreamed in America!

Under "Continental Style" and "Deluxe" are the finest homes and facilities built for the "Active Retirement" in Sun City. The homes are completely planned, completely furnished, for those who want complete care of their lives. Sun City is a "Total Retirement Community" with everything you need for a care-free and care-free life.

For more information, contact the Sun City Office, 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, Phoenix, Arizona 85021.

...Sun City is providing the active retirement of those who want to live life. A "Proven Success" will create a new life for those who are "Active Retirement" in Sun City. Sun City is a "Total Retirement Community" with everything you need for a care-free and care-free life.

...Sun City is a "Total Retirement Community" with everything you need for a care-free and care-free life. Sun City is a "Total Retirement Community" with everything you need for a care-free and care-free life.

**Mail This TODAY**

Del E. Webb Corporation  
P.O. Box 10801  
Phoenix, Arizona 85021

**DEL E. WEBB CORPORATION**

Figure 5

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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Figure 6



Don Williams  
**Sun Cities**  
MUSEUM

10501

ADT



The Village  
**Sun Cities**  
MUSEUM

3801





Don Webb  
  
**Sun Cities**  
MUSEUM











Please do not sit here





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Sun City DEVCO Model No.1  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARIZONA, Maricopa

DATE RECEIVED: 1/09/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/24/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000022

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 2/24/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*1959-1960*

*social history  
open land*

RECOM./CRITERIA *A*

REVIEWER *[Signature]*

DISCIPLINE *[Signature]*

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 2/24/15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places**

**Comments  
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

**Property Name:** Sun City DEVCO Model #1  
**Property Location:** 10801 W. Oakmont Drive  
**Reference Number:** 12000422  
**Date of Return:** 7/25/12

---

**Reasons for Return**

The Sun City DEVCO Model #1 nomination is being returned for substantive revisions.

The individual nomination was submitted for Model #1, "The Kentworth" house, one of five floor plan models, constructed to showcase a new planning concept in the late-1950s of constructing age-segregated, retirement communities. The Kentworth and the other model homes were part of a larger designed and constructed community by DEVCO (Del Webb Development Company) that included in the first phase of its development, street layouts, sidewalks, single-family homes, apartments, a shopping center, and golf course.

Section 8.

While the Kentworth model home is a significant historic resource and is a contributing resource within a much larger development, as a single property, it is not significant under the area of significance of Community Planning and Development. As defined by the National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, this area is used to document "the design or development of the physical structure of communities." As a single model building, this property does not illustrate how it falls within the relationship of the larger plan and development of Sun City. A larger district, including the other model homes and the shopping and recreational areas that were established at the 1960 opening of Sun City, would be more appropriate to convey this significance.

What this nomination is significant for is in Social History, for the type of housing lifestyle promoted to this newly emerging middle-class group of retirees and the contribution this model home made to DEVCO's new concept of living--resort-retirement housing as part of an active (50+ age and over) community.

This nomination needs to provide a stronger context explaining how this house fits within the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century idea of retirement living, how it documents this history and the life ways of this age group—where mobility, income levels, marketing, and the visionary development ideas of Del Webb for “an age-segregated community with amenities”—were all major ingredients to Sun City's success.

Provide a social history context for understanding the contributions that this model home made to the larger development of Sun City. Expand the period of significance to adequately encompass the time period illustrating DEVCO's efforts to promote this resort-retirement lifestyle to the middle-class. A prime information source covering this focus is found in the book, “Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture After 1940,” by John M. Findlay. An entire chapter is devoted to Sun City, AZ and illustrates the social aspects of the residents, the marketing of this lifestyle to retirees, the attitudes of the early residents, and the impact this age-segregated community had on later phases of Sun City and on nearby Phoenix. Resources footnoted for Findlay's chapter should also be consulted for additional information.

Once this larger context is established, explain the impact this particular “compactly designed” model had within the first phase of development and the marketing of Sun City. Because of its size, what type of income level did Model #1 attract, how did it compare to the other models, and what does this property say about promoting the welfare of middle-class retirement living? How popular was the “style” of the Kentworth and how many Kentworth's were constructed by the ending period of significance? Was this model used in later phases of this resort-retirement development? From a social history standpoint, was there a preference for this smaller single-family, detached home within a single-family neighborhood over living in a unit within Sun City's apartment complexes?

Lastly, please provide addition information on the Schreiber Brothers as builders. What role did they play with DEVCO and were they one of many builders involved in the actual construction of Sun City?

Please call me at 202-354-2239, or e-mail at <lisa\_deline@nps.gov> if you have any questions.

Lisa Deline, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places

Janice K. Brewer  
Governor

Bryan Martyn  
Executive Director



Board Members

Alan Everett, Sedona, *Chair*  
Walter D. Armer, Jr., Vail  
Mark Brnovich, Phoenix  
R. J. Cardin, Phoenix  
Kay Daggett, Sierra Vista  
Larry Landry, Phoenix  
Vanessa Hickman,  
State Land Commissioner

December 29, 2014

Carol Shull  
Interim Keeper of the National Register  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS2280)  
Washington, D.C. 2005-5905



**RE: SUN CITY DEVCO MODEL #1**  
**Sun City, Maricopa, AZ**

Dear Ms. Shull:

I am pleased to submit the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the property referenced above.

Accompanying documentation is enclosed, as required. Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me at [vstrang@azstateparks.gov](mailto:vstrang@azstateparks.gov) or at 602.542.4662.

Sincerely,

Vivia Strang, CPM  
National Register Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Arizona State Parks

Enclosures

VS:vs