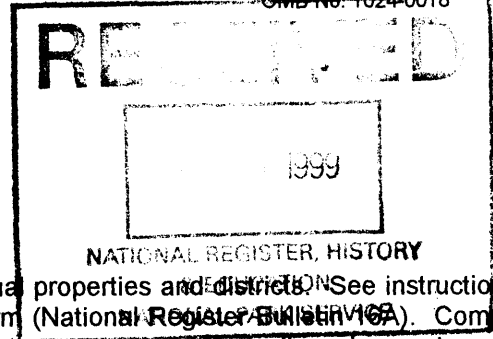


1068

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: **William Cox Building**

other names/site number: **Mountain States Telephone Office; Casa Grande Survey Site No. 282**

2. Location

street & number: **501 North Marshall Street**

city or town: **Casa Grande**

state: **Arizona** code: **AZ**

county: **Pinal** code: **021**

not for publication: N/A

vicinity: N/A

zip code: **85222**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide x locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. Gamble ARESHP
Signature of certifying official

27 JULY 1999
Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS.
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 9/3/99
 ___ See continuation sheet.
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register _____
 ___ See continuation sheet.
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- ___ removed from the National Register _____
- ___ other (explain): _____

for

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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
- ___ district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u> 1 </u>	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category: COMMERCE/TRADE Subcategory: Business (office building)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category: GOVERNMENT Subcategory: Government office

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Category: NO STYLE Subcategory: N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: CONCRETE
Roof: OTHER
Other: N/A

Narrative Description (*SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 6-8*)

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8. Statement of Significance

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

- X** A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- X** B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X** 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.)

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1948-1949

Significant Dates

1948 (Construction date)

Significant Person

Cox, William Morton

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Fricke, August Wilhelm (Builder-contractor, 1948)

Narrative Statement of Significance (*SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 9-13*)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Bibliography (*SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 14*)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested (Tax Act Certification - Part One).
- 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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: N/A

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property __Less than one acre__

UTM References (See accompanying USGS map for point reference)
Zone 12 429750E 3637870N

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary is that of Tax Parcel 507-07-12707, Pinal County, Arizona; the parcel includes Lots 19 and 20 of Block 19 in the Casa Grande Townsite.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the building and lot comprising the property.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title:	Pat Haigh Stein	date:	February 1999
organization:	Arizona Preservation Consultants	telephone:	(520) 714-0585
street/number:	6786 Mariah Drive	zip code:	86004
city or town:	Flagstaff	state:	AZ

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Additional Documentation

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Continuation Sheets (pages 6-15)

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property (Photos 1 through 3)
Historical photograph of the builder, August W. Fricke (Photo 4)

Additional items

None

=====

Property Owner

=====

name:	McCarville/Cooper/Vasquez	telephone:	(520) 836-8265
street & number:	P.O. Box 15005	state:	Arizona
city or town:	Casa Grande	zip code:	85230-5005

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 6 William Cox Building
 Pinal County, Arizona

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DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The William Cox Building occupies a corner lot on the edge of the downtown business district of Casa Grande in Pinal County, Arizona. The property is a one-story commercial building constructed in 1948 to provide office space for the city's growing business community. Main structural elements are its cast-concrete walls and wood-truss roof. Design attributes include a low parapet, flat canopy and large display windows along the two streetfronts, and transomed doors. A 1998 Tax Act project restored the exterior and lobby to their historic appearance while adapting the interior for government office space. The General Services Administration now leases the privately-owned building for use by the Social Security Administration.

Location and Setting

The property is located at the corner of North Marshall and East 4th Streets within the original Casa Grande Townsite. The Southern Pacific Railroad, completed through the area in 1879, provided the axis for the townsite, platted in 1892. Alignment of the streets with the tracks gave the former a northwest-southeast orientation. Early (pre-1922) commercial construction in the downtown developed close to the tracks around Main and 1st Streets. In the late 1920s, the business district began moving north along 2nd and 3rd Streets. By 1948, when the Cox Building was erected, the commercial district had continued expanding northward to include a small portion of 4th Street. Today the building still lies near the edge of the downtown business district (Pry 1998).

The building has zero setback from the sidewalk along its southeast and southwest sides. Planted in the sidewalk are three large cypress trees and a towering palm. Streetscape elements also include historic street signage, period lighting, and metal, arch-backed benches. Low, neatly-trimmed hedges emphasize the long horizontal lines of the building. Four small citrus trees add definition to four doorways along the southeast side. A paved parking lot adjoins the northwest side of the building. An alley runs along the northeast elevation.

Description

The William Cox Building is a one-story commercial building of unsheathed, slip-form, cast-in-place concrete with a site-fabricated, wood-truss roof. A flat parapet surrounds the low-pitched gable. Built-up material coats the wooden decking of the roof. A flat canopy extends above windows and doors along street frontages on the southeast and southwest sides. Constructed of 1x tongue-and-groove decking on a wood frame, the canopy is suspended by steel tie rods bent through notches in concrete and anchored to trusses.

The form of the building, with its many entrances, reflects the fact that it was designed to provide office space for multiple tenants. The main entrance, facing south toward the corner of Marshall and 4th Streets, provided access to the main tenant, who occupied office space fronting on both streets. Four entrances on Marshall Street and one on 4th provided access to the offices of five additional tenants. Each of the six entrances held a transomed, single-light wooden

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7 William Cox Building
Pinal County, Arizona

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door. The doors along Marshall were each flanked by large windows resembling exaggerated sidelights. The door along 4th adjoined a string of four large windows. Paired windows along the Marshall and 4th Street elevations admitted light to the office of the corner tenant. Accented by the straight, continuous canopy, the fenestration extended the long, low lines of the building.

The building exhibits no particular style. However, its clean, minimalist lines reflect an approach to design influenced by the Modern movement of the twentieth century. The builder-contractor was August Wilhelm Fricke. Information concerning Fricke and his construction history is detailed in Section 8 of this nomination.

Modern Alterations and the 1998 Rehabilitation Project

The building experienced a number of incompatible alterations between its construction in 1948 and its rehabilitation fifty years later. Most resulted from a remodeling effort in the 1960s. The 1998 project, conducted in accordance with the Economic Recovery Tax Act, restored the exterior and lobby to their historic appearance while adapting the interior for use as a government office. David W. Wilson, AIA, designed and oversaw the rehabilitation work. The General Services Administration/GSA now leases the building for occupancy by the Social Security Administration/SSA.

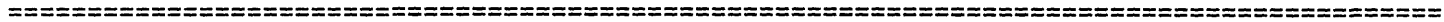
Board-and-batten sheathing had been placed over portions of the windows. The 1998 project removed the sheathing to reveal the original proportions of the office-front openings and replaced a missing window with tempered, insulated glass visually matching the original one. Bearing columns had been placed beneath the sidewalk canopy to support the added load of a sloping shake roof. The rehabilitation effort restored the original, flat canopy, removed the support posts and shake roofing, and inserted stronger tie rods to suspend the canopy. Most doors had been altered and their transoms covered; the 1998 project replaced the doors with ones matching the historic ones and re-opened the transoms. These tasks successfully reversed all incompatible changes to the building as seen from the streetfronts. To meet GSA/SSA needs, the 1998 project also made changes to the *side* of the building facing the parking lot. Two doors were inserted to address ADA and egress concerns, and four windows were cut to admit more natural light to the office space.

Other tasks completed for the Tax Act project were done to adapt the interior for contemporary use. None adversely impacted the exterior. The tenant (GSA) required structural upgrades to add shear value to the concrete walls, strengthen the roof, and stiffen the uplift capacity of the canopy. These upgrades were made from the interior of the building so as not to alter the exterior historic character. The concrete slab-on-grade of the original building was found to be in poor condition, with five different levels; the slab was re-poured and floated to a consistent elevation. Electrical, plumbing, heating, and ventilation systems were removed and replaced; components of these systems were concealed so as to have no intrusive impact on the exterior. Fragments of the original ceiling were found in poor condition above a later, dropped ceiling. The original consisted of fiberboard panels with 1-by-2 battens at the panel joints. The remaining fragments were removed in the course of structurally upgrading the roof. To recreate a sense of the historic fabric, the project installed in the lobby new material replicating that of the original ceiling. The interior was partitioned into office space to meet GSA/SSA requirements.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 8 William Cox Building
Pinal County, Arizona



Integrity

The William Cox Building provides an example of a successful Tax Act project. The work reclaimed the historic character of the exterior while adapting the building for contemporary use. From the streetfront, the building appears as it did when constructed in 1948. Windows and doors now occurring on a side elevation are not readily seen from the streetfront; in any case, their proportions are compatible with those of historic ones on the rest of the building. The property as a whole retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The exterior also possesses integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The level of integrity is sufficient to qualify the property for listing on the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9 William Cox Building
 Pinal County, Arizona

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SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The William Cox Building is significant under Criterion A for its role in the commercial development of Casa Grande, specifically for its association with a 1948-1949 controversy involving the Chamber of Commerce, the City, and the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company. The resource is eligible under Criterion B as the only known surviving property associated with William Cox (1880-1970), a prominent Arizona politician. The property has additional significance under Criterion C as an example of the work of August Wilhelm Fricke (1884-1956), the builder-contractor who gave downtown Casa Grande much of its streamlined, modern appearance. The period of significance for the Cox Building is 1948 to 1949, beginning with the date of construction and ending with the historic period as defined by the National Register. The level of significance is local.

Historical Significance: Criterion A

Casa Grande evolved from a temporary camp called Terminus that developed in May of 1879 at the railhead of the Southern Pacific Railroad (Pry 1998). From this modest beginning, Casa Grande grew into a bustling agricultural community where cotton emerged as unrivaled king. In 1913, business leaders formed a Board of Trade to advance the commercial interests of the community by encouraging growth. Soon reorganized as the Chamber of Commerce, the organization unabashedly pursued the goal of making Casa Grande the leading commercial center of Pinal County. The goal seemed attainable as the years of the 1940s posted increasingly favorable statistics. The year 1947 saw building activity reach an all-time high, representing \$417,625 of construction work, an increase of 18 percent over record totals from 1946 (Pry 1998:32). In 1948, building activity soared to an even higher level -- \$607,446 in construction -- representing a 45 percent increase from 1947 (*Casa Grande Dispatch/CGD*, 1/6/1949). Among the 17 permits issued for business buildings in 1948 was one for a poured-concrete office building to be constructed by August Fricke for William Cox. However, a tenant in the new building would soon spark a controversy that would pit the Chamber and City against a major corporation in a remarkably vituperative battle regarding the future of Casa Grande.

The Cox Building opened in an unremarkable and unceremonious manner. Construction proceeded as scheduled in 1948, and tenants began arriving in the fall. One of the first was Dr. Robert W. Rench, who in November opened his general medical practice in the large corner office of the building. By early January 1949, the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company had moved into the office adjoining Rench to the northwest. Tenants in the small offices to the northeast of Rench would soon include Dr. J. W. Holdren (a dentist) and KCKY, a radio station based in Coolidge, Arizona (*CGD* 11/25/1948, 1/6/1949, 6/9/1949, 10/6/1949).

The event engendering controversy was an announcement by Mountain States Telephone late in 1948. For some time the company had been planning to convert portions of Pinal County, including Casa Grande, from an operator switchboard system to a dial system. To prepare for the conversion in Casa Grande, the company in the fall of 1948 replaced its local office manager (Richard Hills took the place of Herb Unger) and began to install dial equipment. The phone company then issued a statement that Casa Grande would lose its "exchange" status and become a "sub-

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 10 William Cox Building
Pinal County, Arizona

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exchange" of Coolidge when the dial system went into operation in the summer of 1949. The company further stated that it would reduce its Casa Grande staff of 22 (20 operators, a technician, and a manager) to 2 (a technician to make repairs and an "office girl" to collect bills) when the change went into effect. All long-distance calls except those to Phoenix would be routed through operators based at the Coolidge exchange.

The announcement drew a swift and sharp response from Casa Grande. The Chamber of Commerce led the opposition, demanding that the phone company retain Casa Grande as an exchange with long-distance operators on duty. The Junior Chamber of Commerce endorsed the demand. The City Council passed a resolution requesting that the utility company not abandon Casa Grande's exchange status, and the newspaper printed an editorial demanding Casa Grande's "telephone rights" (CGD 1/6/1949). The editorial gives us some sense today of why the phone company's seemingly innocuous announcement touched such a sensitive nerve in the community:

The inauguration of dial telephone service in Casa Grande may well be one of the saddest instead of happiest days in this city's history. On that day, it appears, Casa Grande will lose its logical place as the leading town of Pinal county and become, as far as communications are concerned, a suburb of our neighbor city -- 20 miles distant -- of Coolidge. Not only will we lose a much needed payroll when the Mountain State Telephone and Telegraph Company moves its central office to Coolidge, but we will lose our identity as far as telephone service is concerned...Less important events than this have shaped the course of history and it is indeed deplorable that we have lost this contest for our place in the sun almost by default [CGD 1/6/1949, 4:1-2].

The editorial went on to say that the telephone company had recently been granted a rate increase that would go into effect with the dial conversion; it seemed unfair to the citizens of Casa Grande that they would be paying higher rates but receiving reduced services. By losing "its identity as an exchange with long distance operators," Casa Grande would have no greater status than "Stanfield, Toltec and other small communities" as a sub-exchange under Coolidge (CGD 1/6/1949).

The controversy escalated when the phone company did not immediately respond to the Chamber's demand. Chamber President Eugene K. Mangum said that there appeared to be no attempt at cooperation on the part of the phone company and that the temper of his membership would brook no further delay. The Chamber therefore hired Stephen Langmade, a prominent Phoenix attorney and chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, to present Casa Grande's case before the Arizona Corporation Commission. "They don't propose to meet with us and discuss our problems except at their own convenience," Mangum stated, "so we will carry the fight to them and present our demands at the commission's door" (CGD 1/13/1949, 1:6-7). A week after retaining Langmade, Chamber representatives, accompanied by City officials, secured a meeting with the Tucson District Manager of Mountain States Telephone. When the manager re-stated his company's intention to proceed with its plan, the Chamber and City informed him that there was no need for further discussion with him, and restated their intention to appeal to the Corporation Commission.

The *Casa Grande Dispatch* documented the controversy through front-page headlines, news stories, advertisements, and editorials in almost every edition published during the first quarter of 1949. The phone company issued a statement in an

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11 William Cox Building
 Pinal County, Arizona

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attempt to reassure the community that its service would not be impaired by the conversion to dial and that Casa Grande would not "lose its identity" as a result of the change-over (CGD 1/20/1949, 1:2). The utility also attempted to reason with the local citizenry by placing a newspaper advertisement arguing that centralization of the dial system in Coolidge would mean better service for all users and would save the company \$27,000; lower rates for customers were implied, if not stated. The company substituted the phrase "wire center" for the more emotionally charged "exchange" to describe how Coolidge would function in the centralized system. The company perhaps weakened its economy-of-effort argument by hinting that it would soon attempt to raise rates again. In rebuttal, the community marshaled data to develop an economic argument of its own; its survey showed that 10 leading Casa Grande businesses spent over \$15,000 annually for telephone service, the majority of that for long-distance calls (CGD 2/10/1949). The survey results were presented in the form of a petition to the Corporation Commission, arguing that the retention of long-distance operators in Casa Grande was "vital to the operation of the businesses and the continued growth of the community" (CGD 2/17/1949, 1:7).

The hearing before the Corporation Commission was set for March 7, 1949. Held in Casa Grande, the local turn-out was so great and the witness list so long -- Attorney Langmade presented a list of 60 names -- that the hearing spilled over to March 8. Wilson T. Wright, Chairman of the Corporation Commission, conducted the hearing, apparently with a sense of wit and fairness that impressed even the *Dispatch* (CGD 3/10/1949, 4:1-2). Attorneys representing the phone company were J. H. Shepard of Denver, Lawson Smith of Phoenix, and V. T. Bledsoe, also of Phoenix. In addition to the many principals, witnesses, and telephone users at the hearing, students in the democracy class at Casa Grande Union High School attended as part of their education in the operation of democracy.

On March 21, 1949, the Corporation Commission issued its unanimous decision in favor of the phone company, denying Casa Grande's petition that long-distance operators be retained in Casa Grande when the company converted to the dial system. Chairman Wright stated that if the people of Casa Grande were not receiving good long-distance service by three months after the conversion, they could file a complaint with the Commission and he would see that they received better service. When questioned about the Commission's legal authority to order such a change, Wright replied that its authority in the matter was complete (CGD 3/24/1949).

Despite the unfavorable decision, Casa Grande could soon claim at least a partial victory. Upon further deliberation, Commissioner Wright concurred with a contention of Casa Grande that 14 long-distance lines between that city and Coolidge would not be sufficient to provide good service. He relayed his concern to state officials and the phone company, and got the latter to agree to install a cable (equivalent to 19 or 20 toll circuits) instead of the 14 lines originally planned. The phone company reckoned that the cable would give Casa Grande more circuits than it consumed at that time and would allow for a greater margin of growth in the future (CGD 3/24/1949, 1 & 5). The arrangement appears to have appeased if not fully satisfied Casa Grande. No further episodes in "the battle for Casa Grande's telephone rights" were reported in the local press. It is interesting to note, however, that when Mountain States Telephone continued with its plan to again raise rates, Casa Grande joined with other Arizona cities and successfully urged the Corporation Commission to deny the proposed 14 percent hike (CGD 4/7/1949, 4/21/1949, and 6/30/1949).

In the aftermath of its dispute with Mountain States Telephone, Casa Grande continued to prosper and to become the commercial hub of Pinal County. The 1948-49 controversy has become a fascinating piece of local history that provides

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 12 William Cox Building
 Pinal County, Arizona

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insight into the tenacity of a community facing technological change, the power of a company wielding a virtual monopoly over the service it provided, the authority of a state commission to regulate the interaction of service provider and user, and the self-image and status of an ambitious city fighting for its place in the central Arizona sun.

The Cox Building is significant for its specific association with the telephone controversy and for its more general association with commercial development in downtown Casa Grande. In modern times the building has continued to provide office space for tenants who serve the community. Its longest tenant (from 1967 to 1996) was the law firm of McCarville, Cooper & Vasquez. Owners McCarville and associates rehabilitated the building in 1998 under the provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act. The rehabilitation project restored the exterior and lobby to their historic appearance while adapting the interior for use by the Social Security Administration.

Biographical Significance: Criterion B

The property is significant under Criterion B for its association with namesake and original owner William Morton "Bill" Cox, a prominent State politician. Cox was born in 1880 near French Lick, Indiana. His parents were Charles W. and Jeanette (Milburn) Cox. After a public school education, William moved west and became a locomotive engineer, first for the Southern Pacific, later for the Union Pacific. In 1905 or 1906, he moved to Bisbee, Arizona, where he worked in mining until elected Cochise County Treasurer in 1927. Serving in that capacity until 1930, he began to gain a reputation as a careful, painstaking, and honest politician (Record Publishing 1930; *Arizona Republic* 11/5/1970).

His political arena expanded beyond Cochise County in 1932 when he was elected to the office of State Treasurer. After one term, he was elected to the Arizona Corporation Commission, serving from 1935 to 1941. During World War II, he was appointed Arizona district manager of the motor transport division of the Office of Defense Transportation; simultaneously, he served as secretary of the Arizona Colorado River Commission from 1941 until that board was abolished in 1945. After the war he headed the real estate division of the State Land Department. While serving in that position, he invested in real estate on the edge of downtown Casa Grande and hired a contractor to erect the office building that bears his name. As the building neared completion, Cox announced his candidacy in the Democratic primary for the position of Secretary of State. He was defeated by Wesley Bolin, who later became the State's fifteenth Governor. Cox then became the first Real Estate Commissioner when the State Real Estate Department was created in 1949. He served in that position until his retirement in 1960 (*Phoenix Evening Gazette* 4/1/1942; *CGD* 7/30/1948; *Arizona Republic* 11/5/1970).

The Casa Grande building is the only known surviving property associated with the productive life of William Morton Cox. Cox moved from Bisbee to Phoenix early in his political career. From 1935 to 1970 he resided at 1133 West Moreland in Phoenix (*Arizona Republic* 11/5/1970). However, that house and others within the "Moreland Corridor" were destroyed when Interstate-10 was built in the 1980s. A search of the SHPO's computerized databases (representing thousands of properties in the historic inventory, archaeological inventory, and National Register files) indicates that no property other than the Casa Grande building has been linked to Cox.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 13 William Cox Building
 Pinal County, Arizona

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Architectural Significance: Criterion C

The Cox Building is significant under Criterion C as an example of the work of August Wilhelm "Willie" Fricke, a builder-contractor who gave downtown Casa Grande much of its modern, streamlined appearance. Born in Westphalen, Germany, in 1884, Fricke married Klara Marie Spreen in 1908. The couple had three children, Frieda, Mildred, and William, Jr. August immigrated to the United States in 1911; Klara joined him later. They first lived in Phoenix, but moved to Casa Grande in 1915. The small wagon in which they first resided held household goods, goats, crates of canaries, and the tools Fricke brought from the Old World (Pace 1968).

In Casa Grande, Fricke established himself as a competent builder. He considered no job too small but preferred to work on commercial buildings. He was disdainful of some of the modern tools, preferring to use tools and methods he had learned in Germany. One peculiarly "Frickean" method was his system for determining the level of a building: he would simply dig a footing trench and fill it with water to establish the level (Pace 1968).

Fricke perfected a system of casting concrete that allowed him to fabricate buildings with ease and efficiency. He would first set a course of forms, using vertical bands to hold them in place. He would then mix concrete to a consistency that permitted removing and resetting the forms as soon as the concrete was tamped in place. A wall could thus be fabricated in an amazingly short time. A distinguishing feature of his buildings was their wall texture. Fricke's walls were usually not perfectly smooth. They often billowed slightly along their longitudinal axes and also held the impressions of the vertical members that had been used to hold the forms in place. Fricke sometimes mitigated the rather austere look of his buildings by giving them whimsical parapets (Pry 1998). McNeil's Book Shack at 115-117 E. 4th Street and the B & L Supply building at 113 E. 4th Street display such parapets; the Cox building does not.

Fricke worked for many years with crewmen Fred Baumgartner and John Siegfried. The trio became a colorful fixture of the Casa Grande landscape. They spoke a pidgin of Swiss (probably Romansch), German, and English uniquely their own that became particularly incomprehensible after imbibing Fred's homebrew. Their work ethic bemused and delighted the locals. While erecting the Prettyman building at 4th and Florence Streets, August crashed through a skylight, landing on his shoulder. The doctor placed his shoulder and neck in a cast. Even before the break had healed, August removed the cast, claiming it interfered with his work (Pace 1968).

Fricke worked in construction until shortly before his death in 1956 at the age of 72. His legacy to Casa Grande is a utilitarian architecture of simplicity and elegance. More than a dozen buildings attributed to Fricke remain in the downtown today, on lots from Maricopa to Picacho Streets and from Main to 4th (Wilson 1996). Their crisp, horizontal, relatively unadorned lines give the downtown a distinctly more modern appearance than most other historic cities in Arizona. The William Cox Building is a good example of Fricke's work and of Casa Grande's late historic-period architecture.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 14 William Cox Building
Pinal County, Arizona

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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1970 Obituary: William M. Cox, 90, Former State Treasurer. 11/5/1970: 54. Microfilm copy on file, Department of Library, Archives, and Public Records, Phoenix.

Casa Grande Dispatch

var. Editions of 7/30/1948; 11/25/1948; 1/6/1949; 1/13/1949; 1/20/1949; 2/10/1949; 2/17/1949; 3/10/1949; 3/24/1949; 4/7/1949; 4/21/1949; 6/9/1949; 6/30/1949; and 10/6/1949. Microfilm copy on file, Department of Library, Archives, and Public Records, Phoenix.

Pace, H. O. (Polly)

1968 Untitled article in biographical file for A. W. Fricke. Copy on file, Casa Grande Valley Historical Society, Casa Grande.

Phoenix Evening Gazette

1942 Untitled article concerning appointment of William M. Cox to Office of Defense Transportation. 4/1/1942: 3. Microfilm copy on file, Department of Library, Archives, and Public Records, Phoenix.

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1996 Untitled map depicting Fricke buildings and others in downtown Casa Grande. Original on file, McCarville/Cooper/Vasquez, Casa Grande.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photos Page 15 William Cox Building
Pinal County, Arizona

Photographic Information

The following information applies to Photos 1 through 3:

1. William Cox Building
2. Pinal County, AZ
3. Pat Stein
4. January 1999
5. Arizona Preservation Consultants, Flagstaff, AZ

6. View north showing corner entrance and the two principal elevations of building
7. PHOTO 1

6. View northeast
7. PHOTO 2

6. View northwest showing door and window details along North Marshall Street
7. PHOTO 3

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1. William Cox Building
 2. Pinal County, Arizona
 3. Photographer unknown
 4. Circa 1950
 5. Casa Grande Valley Historical Society, Casa Grande, AZ; photo 91.92.18
 6. August W. Fricke in the yard of his home on 3rd St., Casa Grande, AZ
 7. PHOTO 4