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For immediate release

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Former U.S. Surgeon General serves as local spokesman for Census 2010 public outreach effort

Dr. Richard H. Carmona, former U.S. Surgeon General, will serve as the official spokesman for Census 2010 public outreach efforts in Pima County, Pima Association of Governments announced today.

“Dr. Carmona is a perfect representative for getting the word out on the importance of being counted as part of the Census 2010 efforts, particularly since we know that the Hispanic population is considered hard-to-count and one that we are making a greater effort to target in our public outreach efforts,” said Joyce Finkelstein, chair of PAG’s Complete Count Committee.

PAG established a Complete Count Committee last fall to include member jurisdictions, community-based organizations and representatives from education, business and the media. The CCC and its subcommittees are ensuring that all residents of Pima County are counted through a variety of outreach efforts.

Dr. Carmona is expected to appear in TV and radio commercials and on billboards, providing a message of “Make Your Family Count.” He also is expected to participate in upcoming media interviews.

Born to a poor Hispanic family in New York City, Dr. Carmona experienced homelessness, hunger and health disparities during his youth. The experiences greatly sensitized him to the relationships among culture, health, education and economic status, and shaped his future.

Prior to becoming the U.S. Surgeon General in 2002, Dr. Carmona served 20 years with the Pima County Sheriff’s Department in Tucson, including as deputy sheriff, detective, SWAT team leader and department surgeon. He also previously served as the CEO of the Pima County Health Care System. He currently is vice chair for Canyon Ranch, the country’s leading health and wellness company for over 30 years.

“My life experiences and my work give me great understanding of the need for all people in this

--MORE--

Page 2

country to be counted,” Dr. Carmona said. “I encourage everyone in Pima County to take a moment to understand the benefits that you and your family will receive by completing your 10-question census form.”

Distribution of federal funding to communities is based on population, which is revised according to Census data. Each year, the federal government sends over \$400 billion to communities nationwide, mostly based on their population. For every person counted in Pima County, the region receives approximately \$1,000. For a family of four, the 10-year return on investment is \$40,000.

In addition, Pima County annually receives \$1,500 per capita in state-shared revenues, which are based on population.

These dollars fund important critical community services, including police and fire protection, schools, libraries, parks, health care, road and transportation improvements, and senior and community centers.

“It’s also important to note that information recorded on census forms remains confidential,” Finkelstein said. “Everyone should be counted, regardless of citizenship, and filling out the form is required by law.”

The 10-question form will be mailed to all available addresses during March. People are asked to complete the form and return it by April 1. U.S. census workers will begin knocking on doors after April 1 at known residences that have not returned the forms. Official workers will have formal U.S. Census Bureau identification.

“Tucson and all of our communities in Pima County, including the Tohono O’odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe, are one big family,” Dr. Carmona said. “By filling out the form, you will help make our region a better place to live for your family and for all of us. Let’s team up and make your family count.”

Dr. Carmona also serves as chief executive officer for the Canyon Ranch Health division and oversees health strategy and policy for all Canyon Ranch businesses. He is president of the nonprofit Canyon Ranch Institute and the first Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the University of Arizona’s Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health.

Additional information about the census and local outreach efforts may be found at www.pagCensus.com.

Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, air quality and water quality. PAG’s staff gather and analyze data, provide accurate information, and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote good decision-making for the region. Please visit www.PAGnet.org for more information.