



**Yuma Visit**  
**County Supervisors Association**  
**Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer**  
Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Thank you very much.

I am delighted to be able to spend some time with you today, because, for me, being with all of you county officials, is a little bit like coming home.

I feel I am one of you – because, well, I AM one of you.

I have been in your shoes.

And, as they say, before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away -- and you have their shoes.

But, seriously, most of you know my county record. You know that I know the struggles that are involved at the county level.

When I first arrived in Maricopa County government, I encountered a local system that was bogged down so deeply in debt that it had utilized \$165 million in short-term borrowing -- just to meet cash flow.

At the end of my tenure in 2002, I left Maricopa County in one of the strongest financial positions of any county in the country.

During my chairmanship at the County, I worked hard to provide better salaries for Sheriff Deputies and County Prosecuting Attorneys, I negotiated large land

conservation deals that added thousands of acres of pristine land into county parks and away from development.

Maricopa Medical Center's Burn Unit was improved and expanded and stands today as one of the pre-eminent health care facilities in the nation.

I remind you all of this, for a reason.

I have been in hard times. I have been tested.

I know what you all are going through.

As you well know, the budget the Legislature first handed me, proposed a \$276 million cut to local governments.

Because I understood the important services local governments deliver, the fiscal challenges that local governments face, I tried to minimize the impact to those local governments.

In the end, after negotiations -- signing and vetoing the various budget bills -- the impact stands at \$44 million to counties.

While this is not to say that more cuts are not coming, I signed bills for budget and policy-related items that allowed counties more flexibility in your day-to-day operations as county and state shared constituencies struggle through this rough economy.

You all have made cuts of your own to county budgets, requiring very tough and sometimes painful local decisions.

But, I will tell you this -- I continue to believe that our State budget should not balance our significant problems by simply transferring this burden to the backs of county governments.

I also want to emphasize that I have not given up on sending the sales tax referral to the voters for consideration.

The fact of the matter is, we must give Arizonans an opportunity to decide if they will approve a temporary 1-percent tax to stabilize the state economy, and protect critical resources for our most vulnerable.

I TRUST the voters. And, so should every single one of our legislators.

Together, we will resolve the budget crisis -- that I inherited -- and I strongly believe we can -- and will -- rebound over the next few years. To do so, we need

additional revenue and a long-term plan such as the one I laid out to the Legislature last March.

At the same time, you can assist me as we seek to stem the tide of federal encroachment into the internal affairs of Arizona.

For example, in a recent letter to Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, I told him the costs to Arizona's Medicaid program under his proposal are far greater than Congressional Budget Office estimates.

It is incomprehensible that Congress is contemplating an enormous unfunded entitlement mandate on the states.

The disconnect between policymakers in Washington and the reality of state and local governments is nothing short of disturbing.

For example, new federal rules under consideration by the EPA threaten to close the Navajo Generating Station in northern Arizona -- impacting jobs and water costs for businesses, governments, and citizens throughout Arizona.

Further, the proposed federal rules would have a particularly pernicious impact on the Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation.

You get the idea. Bureaucrats in Washington now seem empowered to tell us how to run our business.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Every state is ... divided into counties each to take care of what lies within its local bounds; each county again into townships or wards to manage minute details ... were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want for bread."

And, Ronald Reagan warned us that, (Quote) "As the distinctions blur, our people have lost far too much control over public policies that affect their daily lives. They no longer know who to blame when things go wrong. For example, if you have a problem with the way your child's school is run, who do you talk to? The teacher? The principal? The superintendent? The Governor? The courts? A department in Washington or, perhaps, the President?"(End quote)

As County officials, you know the issues, the problems, -- and the solutions.

Our success depends on allowing local governments to work through the difficult times at the local level, with the people who know best how to solve the tough issues and move their communities forward.

As county officials, you are at the heart of the solution. You are the key.

I am confident your leadership will continue to be wise and thoughtful, and that with your help, Arizona herself will emerge stronger and rightfully prouder than ever before.

Thank you again for the invitation to speak with you. God bless you all, God bless your families, and God bless the great State of Arizona.