Cochosse County's economy feels the pinch of Arizona's fade

BY DANIELLE KHIMARA
The Tombstone Epitaph

A year ago, Adrianne Cooper opened Cooper's Credit Repair
Nails-out of her home in Hereford, a small town in rural Cochise County,
less than a half-hour drive from the Mexican border.

Within nine months, her business—helping people build up
their finances and fix their credit issues—moved to a 280-square-foot office
in Sierra Vista, the county's largest town.

“Now, she’s upgraded to a somewhat more
suitable location,” Cooper said, who thinks the local
economy has largely recovered from its economic downturns.

Thanks to groundworks, the Cochise County
has watched both jobs and people
and mountain in the far southeastern
of hard times. A remote, sparsely
that has suffered more than its share
of Sahuarita to develop that land for

In 2000,..the Waldens may be
unusual because of the master plan
forward thinking is a
that is driving their
to network and collaborate with people from other

“In that sense there’s a lot of water
savings,” Lien said. “Every acre that’s converted to
land, is the chief economist at the Cochise
County’s population
is just under
over the past decade, falling from
42.6% to 32.9%
from their own economic downturns,

In 2013, Cochise had the biggest
population percentage loss of any
in the past 30 years, said Shane
of the Maricopa Agricultural Center.

“However, there’s been agriculture
here forever,” he said. “But we understand we may not be able to
and the public. One concern raised was about  patients
are built. Arizona has a $6.3 billion
into housing.

Though the Waldens were
however, the number is
now exceeded
The Southeastern Arizona Governments
Organization is conducting studies to evaluate
locations.

There is a fear that the county’s
farms can’t stay
Silvertooth mentioned his friend
David Axelrod, who lives in the
Yuma Valley and has already begun
to convert some of his farmland
into housing.

"It's pure economics," Silvertooth said. "He can make a
lot of money doing that.”

But the ethics just makes me
waste less water.

"With the exception of flooding
Out of the 18 million acres of
A 2008 study from the
found in Southern Arizona
more than half the
uses more water than housing, said
to have the capacity to have that farmland
in the future generations.

And developing
Much older parts of the farm rely on
flood irrigation to provide vital
wants to do as a state.”

It’s cool and inviting – and hard
shaded pathway between the rows.
The smell is
dark green reaching up to mix with
stretches into the distance, their
understory are artificial
are built. Arizona has a $6.3 billion
into housing.

"Every acre that’s converted to
farm or at home," Walden says. "People in

Silvertooth, director of the
in 2008, said Shane
of the Maricopa Agricultural Center.

"What we’re doing is depriving future generations the capacity to
have that farmland."
Deep in the Sonoran Desert as cows are running down the roads and on either side cattle are spotted amongst a variety of pale greenery and what seems like an endless amount of cattle for the meat to come.

The 30,000-acre Santa Lucia Ranch owned by Jon and Peggy Rowley. Two people who, during this profoundly intense time of drought, are innovating ways to keep their cattle and their affluent business alive and thriving, having sea-sawed on the desert.

The secret for cattle ranching is timing, and after forty years of full-time cattle ranching Jon and Peggy have their timing down.

If the Rowleys had four hundred cows at the end of a year, the goal would be to have all cows produce a calf at exactly the same time. In a perfect world all those calves would be born in January, and the Rowleys would have planned for the plan. “I think it’s a good idea. I’m excited.” Two supervisor, expressed her support for the plan. “It will need to be subsidized or it won’t work.”

The Rowleys discuss the life of a rancher on the Santa Lucia Ranch. The four proposed cities within Cochise County that SEAGO is conducting studies on. They hope to create an intercity route early next spring between Benson, Tombstone, and Sierra Vista. This is the 30,000-acre Santa Lucia Ranch run by the Rowley’s and cowboys, none of whom are under the age of 60.

Peggy Rowley next to her husband Jon discusses the life of a rancher on the Santa Lucia Ranch on Monday, Sept. 26. The property Editor: Rebecca Noble

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SEAGO’s annual updated transportation plan laid out the interests from several other cities within Cochise County and throughout Arizona.

With a large geographical service area, and sparsely populated spaces that have a significant population of baby-boom generation and elderly, transportation needs within the SEAGO region are significant,” the plan said.

A bus route between Tombstone and Sierra Vista was an interest among members, as well as developing a route connecting Cochise County towns to Tucson.

He is group is expected to present their evaluations to public officials in March.

According to a 2014 study by the University of Arizona’s Cooperative Extension Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics “The Contribution of the Beef Industry to the Arizona Economy,” grazing is the dominant land use in Arizona. 98 percent of Arizona’s agricultural land is used for grazing and 73 percent of Arizona’s total land. Needless to say any grazing is not only a big deal to the cows but as well as to the land.

One of the most prominent problems of cattle ranching across the country is drought. Water is necessary in order for there to be vegetation across the land for the cows to graze and bulk up upon, and for the cows in Southern Arizona it’s either feast or famine.

While the spring months are the perfect time for rain and growth in popular ranching areas like Wyoming, the dry spring months in the desert create roadblocks in the growth of the crop. “Drought isn’t the exception, it’s the rule,” according to the New Ranch Handbook: A Guide to Restoring Western Rangelands.

According to a Defenders of Wildlife report “Climate Change and the Sonoran Desert Region,” much of the Sonoran Desert has seen anywhere between 23 to 40 percent deep in precipitation over the past 50 years. Fortunately for the ranchers of Southern Arizona’s last rain has been favorable in recent years resulting in abundant grass and feed for the cows. The lack of rain over the last few years has killed the grasses and the plant had a bucket up significantly, it’s now time for the harvest.

For the annual harvest, the three cowboys, the oldest of whom just retired at 88 and the youngest is 66, go on throughout the round up the cattle spread across the 30,000 acres of land that the Santa Lucia Ranch covers. After all the roping and waving of the brands, it would not be unusual to see the beasts that could crush any one of the cowboys, it’s time for sorting and then selling

“Every bit of that animal is used for something. Whether it be for food, clothing or fertilizer,” Jon said. The beef industry, comprised of cattle ranching, has great impact on the economy of Arizona. According to University of Arizona’s 2014 study “The Contribution of the Beef Industry to the Arizona Economy,” the beef industry contributes $57.3 billion each year to the Arizona economy and $431 million in value added.

Not only does the beef industry produce a lot of money, but it also provides a multitude of jobs. According to the 2014 study, “every 105 beef industry jobs in Arizona support an additional 62 jobs in other industries.”

“Energy for the beef industry creates 9,750 jobs in Arizona.”

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In Tombstone, memories of a sad-faced clown

**BY KYLE KOCEVAR**

The Tombstone Epitaph

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By MIKAYLA MACE
Southeastern Arizona votes Republican
By JULIANNE STANFORD & ALEX MCINTYRE
The Tombstone Epitaph.