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Gov. Brewer attends South Rim Town Hall *Arizona Town Hall officials talk about Arizona's economy*

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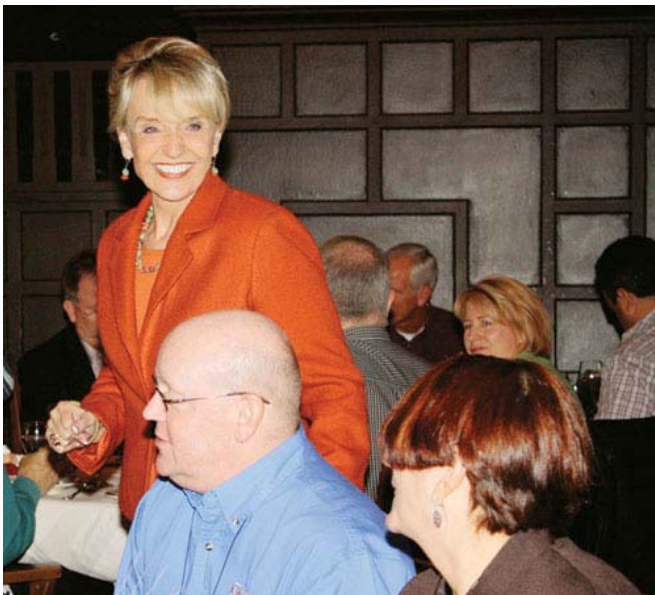


Photo courtesy Arizona Town Hall
Governor Jan Brewer at the 95th Arizona Town Hall, titled "Riding the Fiscal Roller Coaster: Government Revenue in Arizona." The town hall was held at the Maswick Lodge at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon Nov. 1-4. Brewer addressed the organization Nov. 2.

GRAND CANYON, Ariz. - Gov. Jan Brewer made her way to the South Rim Nov. 2 to talk about Arizona's economy with members of the 95th Arizona Town Hall. The meeting, which took place Nov. 1-4 at Maswick Lodge, hosted a number of Arizonans to address the issue of Arizona's government revenue system. Included were representatives from Coconino County.

Members of the town hall are made up of individuals from varying professions, geographic areas, and political parties. Representatives from Coconino County included District 2 Rep. Tom Chabin, Coconino County Manager Steve Peru, Marc Chopin of [Northern Arizona University](#), Coconino County District 4 Supervisor Mandy Metzger, and Ernest Strauch, former Sedona vice mayor.

In her remarks to the roughly 140 people who attended the town hall, which meets twice every year, Brewer said the enormity of the state's financial troubles were akin to the Grand Canyon and suggested a remedy that would quickly earn money for the state.

"She made reference to the Grand Canyon, about Arizona's fiscal issues being very much in a hole, like the Grand Canyon," said Tara Jackson, president of the non-profit Arizona Town Hall organization.

The recent meeting, titled "Riding the Fiscal Roller Coaster: Government Revenue in Arizona," also featured a number of

California legislators, who offered a presentation titled, "What Arizona Can Learn from California's Fiscal Mess."

"We seem to be heading down a path similar to California if we're not careful," Jackson said, adding that the 95th Town Hall attempted to make sense of Arizona's revenue system. As a state, she said Arizona relies too heavily on sales tax, creating an imbalance in the state's revenue systems. Political issues, she added, have also gotten in the way of resolutions that could prove beneficial to the state.

"When the economy takes a dip, the impact on the state is magnified than what many states experience," Jackson said.

According to a preliminary report issued by the organizers for the Town Hall, members acknowledged the critical nature of Arizona's economic woes and suggested that legislators take immediate action in raising revenues for the state. Their findings, Jackson said, will be summarized and made available to Arizona legislators. Meetings with various communities will also be held to report on the findings of Town Hall members. More information on the organization can be found online at www.aztownhall.org.

According to Jackson, the group has been in existence for a little over 46 years. Jackson has been president of the organization for three years.

"We do not represent any particular political interest," Jackson said. "Our process is designed to share the knowledge of different parts of Arizona and to find agreements based on building relationships and consensus."

One of the organization's main goals, she said, is to bring together different views in a civil setting. Rural voices and different political perspectives are encouraged among the group.

"The very first Arizona Town Hall was held in 1962 at the Grand Canyon on the subject of taxes," Jackson said. "We hold two Town Halls a year. Since that very first Town Hall, the fall Town Hall has been held every year at the Grand Canyon. Members are from all over the state. Board members are specifically elected to represent the state as a whole."

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