

The Following Are A Selected Group of Comments Posted by Interested Citizens Who Have Taken the Time to *Speak Out* In Favor of Preserving Rillito Racetrack In Recent Blogs appearing On local daily newspaper websites. Names and identity of these individuals are kept completely anonymous.

Rillito Race Track pays rent TO the county, for use of the facility. Soccer costs the taxpayers.

Rillito EMPLOYS residents, provides entertainment for thousands of people each day the track is open, and on its closing day this year, had a head count of over 9,000 people through the gates, The same day the county hosted the Tucson Rodeo Finals and a championship golf tournament.

The track facilities are not up to snuff because the county has not lived up to its agreement to keep its facilities for horseracing in good repair. This is not the fault of Rillito Park Racetrack, but the fault of the Lessor (Pima County). The horsemen have a valid lease, the county is violating its obligations there under.

Pima County promised the horsemen a new racetrack and the horsemen agreed to move racing if they did agree - takes more than a few months to build a racetrack - so the county has re-nigged on its promise to keep racing alive in Pima County.

It would be cheaper for the taxpayers to refurbish the existing facilities.

Why can't the two sports co-exist or does the county have other plans for the land once the soccer fad is over.

Incidentally, a couple of years ago Pima County had more soccer fields than the city of Chicago. Go figure.

...And one thing that is not talked about in these articles on the racing is that the UofA has an interest in the racing here. Bob Baffort, of Triple Crown Horse Racing fame, is a graduate of the U's horse breeding/training program that is based at Campbell and Roger Roads. Not that that should make a difference but by doing away with the racing you are also doing away with a program of study at the U. Next nearest track is in Nogales. As Tucson is always looking for added income from tourists, do you want

....There is NO good reason the horses can't keep racing at Rillito. Its only 2 weeks a year . there are many many school play grounds in Tucson. let the blind wearing moms take their kids there. ONLY 2 WEEKS A YEAR. !!

If both sides have the resources to continue fighting each other for Rillito, then they can certainly compromise to continue HORSE RACING and SOCCER at Rillito for all Tucsonans and visitors to enjoy. Please do not pander to wealthy self-interests on either side. Find a way to keep horse racing and soccer at Rillito to promote SPORTSMANSHIP over MONEY!

...Rillito race track is one of Tucson's remaining icons. Preserve it! We tore down the El Con Hotel for a shopping center that could have been placed anywhere. Think what a treasure the hotel would be now. We have so little left that made Tucson special. it once was quaint yet quite cultured, particularly in the late 50's and early 60's. When i travel and see the evolution of cities like Seattle, San Diego, Denver and yes, even Phoenix during the same time period it is saddening and maddening. we have not evolved and preserved. We have devolved and destroyed. thank you Ed Moore!

...we are paying millions to create a "historical site" downtown, but are going to level a real life one for soccer? Doesn't make sense.

There is something real class in having a horse racing and stabling facility in an urban area. Being rustic enhances the charm. Executive sky boxes are not always the answer. The wind at the fair grounds can make racing an unpleasant experience and who wants to go to Marana? In years to come Rillito will be come more and more unique in the landscape whereas soccer fields will become more of the same.

Put a giant soccer complex in Marana. Keep the track.

...there are enough open lands the city and county owns that could be used for soccer fields. Leave the track alone or face a private law suit in the billions.

Here's an idea: now that spring training teams won't use the brand new tax supported stadium we built for them and are leaving for more profitable waters and since most of the people playing soccer tend to be from that area of town, convert TEP to a soccer arena and kill two birds with one stone!

Build a giant domed stadium. That is what Tucson needs. Indoor horse racing. Why not? Soccer in 110 degree heat is not in the best interest of the sport. Football indoors, Baseball indoors. Conventions indoors.

It's easy to sit back and call active citizens "bullies" especially when most of the naysayers don't do much of anything but sit on their tush when things could be done to prevent mistakes by city planning officials before the mistakes happen. Those who think that everything old is ugly and needs tearing down are the same ones who wander the streets of downtown Tucson today and wonder what ever happened to the charm and history that used to make central Tucson a beautiful and historic place to visit. The erecting in the 70's of huge chunks of concrete like the eyesore La Placita complex downtown obviously destroyed blocks and blocks of barrios of history that would have been much more enjoyable today if they had been restored instead of being destroyed to make way for questionable "progress". It looks like the same thing is still happening nearly 40 years later. The Rillito track is a piece of early Tucson history. Rather than spending just meager amounts to fix up storm damage issues, the city could be developing a class restoration that would improve the racing facility into something first class and really nice. This kind of investment would not only help preserve Tucson's image of being an early American Western community that did have ties to horses. Restored properly, the now eyesore track could become a special destination that could attract visitors that would much rather see a beautiful historic restoration instead of a bunch of soccer fields that could actually built in several other locations. We might even increase the racing season; and really getting behind something unique that this city needs badly to attract people to see we can build things that look a little more attractive than a Circle K or a Walgreens on every single block of this grid-ugly town.

Move soccer out to the fairgrounds and leave horse racing at Rillito. Soccer is not part of Tucson's heritage. There are many horse racing fans that are not going to drive all the way out to the Pima County Fairgrounds dust bowl. Stop destroying Tucson's heritage.

.... horse racing already contributes to the economy, but it has cost \$538,775 over three years, or about \$179,591 a year (not much when you think about it). If this is to be a valid argument, we'd need to know the economic impact of horse racing and the costs of building and maintenance of those soccer fields, along with the cost of the five or more tournaments. Besides, I still maintain that the fields would never be built. That's prime land at 1st avenue and River. Given the cozy relationships that our politicians have with

developers, along with their history of not completing projects, it's easy to foresee the track being demolished and the land staying vacant for a few years. Then it would be traded or sold for commercial development because somehow, we just ran out of money before the fields could be built. Let's keep what we have and fix it up.

Age has nothing to do with the fact that Rillito Downs is on the National Registry of Historic Places. It was the first track in the United States to run sanctioned Quarter Horse races. It was the first track west of the Mississippi to offer pari-mutuel betting on horse races. Rillito Downs is not a soccer field and I hope it never becomes one. Tucson is a horse town and always will be, regardless of how many soccer moms want it to be something else. p.s. Chataqua, (and I'm not certain of the spelling) now covered by houses and condos, ran the first ever Quarter Horse race, if memory serves me. ...My mistake. It was Moltacqua, not Chataqua. Anyone interested, look up J. Rukin Jelks and his involvement in the tracks in Tucson.

This "opinion" is a result of the finely written article in the Sunday paper regarding this subject. With Pima County reneging on plans for a new horse track in Marana, former Supervisor Ed Moore has warned he will sue if the county goes ahead with conversion of Rillito to an 18-field soccer tournament site. He says the conversion mostly will benefit soccer clubs that charge fees to hire professional coaches, and it's inappropriate for the county to spend tax dollars on soccer fields to benefit private businesses. In my opinion there are plenty of soccer fields across the county, but not many historic race tracks.

Putting soccer fields where Rillito is would be a terrible mistake. I'm not anti-soccer, but I do think that it would be better to have the fields some other place than 1st and River. It's already congested there, why do we want to make it worse? Rillito Downs is a treasured piece of history, even if you soccer-hungry people can't see it. We demolish this and why stop there? Let's start demolishing everything else on the National Register; history? Who needs that? /sarcasm.

Ix-nay on the Occer-say. Bring on the ponies!

Too bad there is no way to satisfy both agendas because it would be nice to keep horse racing in a more central location and create more fields for youth soccer.

I am not against soccer, but do not think Pima County Fair Grounds is the place for horse racing. It is so far removed from the majority of Tucson's population that it will surely die. It started at Rillito and it should remain at Rillito.