

be in place by the time of the election in March.

Smith gives a pat on the back to current Mayor Kelly Ander-

Other issues on which Smith offered comments included "green" initiatives, which he'd like to have more of, including

construction of infrastructure improvements, community planning, and site development."

When Smith moved to Mari-

He has already started down that road. He hopes to get voters to join him.

Mass transit coming to Maricopa

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As with any major city process which requires an allocation of funds for service, bids are being accepted from transportation companies for the contract to provide this transit service. But herein lies the problem – the process has not run as smoothly as might be anticipated. It begins with the taking of bids. The Maricopa city code outlines the procedure for taking bids, citing in Section 3-4-6, "A notice or solicitation for bids shall state the date, time and place of opening, and the place and time period within which bids shall be submitted." It goes on to say, "Any bid not received within the time period allowed shall be rejected."

Initially, the notice for bids that was posted set the proposal deadline at January 14th of this year. At this meeting of transport providers, all bids were to be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked only as "Bid" as set forth by Maricopa city code. However, all of the companies that were planning to submit a bid were there for the purpose of asking questions for further understanding of the project, and were not prepared as directed.

All of the companies, that is, except for one.

Locally owned and operated company Maricopa Transit Systems (MTS), located within the Alterra housing development, was prepared to submit their fully researched and prepared bid. By the city's own standard, MTS' bid should have been accepted, and the contract should have been awarded accordingly, assuming the bid presented a feasible and reasonable solution. However, the city broke its

the bid due date from that which was posted, giving the competition until January 22nd to prepare their bids.

Of the 10 different companies that attended the original meeting, MTS was the only organization that is operated from the city of Maricopa. MTS has been operating for some time under the name Maricopa Shuttle, Limo, and Taxi. MTS is currently the only provider of scheduled trips in and out of the Phoenix area and provides a number of special services to meet the needs of the community. Besides local limousine and taxi service, the shuttle service includes a number of regular routes to shopping centers and movie theaters, as well as weekend service to a number of Phoenix nightclubs in order to reduce the rate of drunk driving. There are also a number of services for senior citizens.

MTS' owner/operator Udoamaka Obiekea (a.k.a. "Mr. Peace") is a 2-year resident of Maricopa. Before moving to Arizona, Mr. Peace spent 6 years as an operator for the Los Angeles Transit Service, earning multiple awards

since been a Transit Manager, learning the correct procedures for providing a transit system in a timely and cost effective manner. His plan is outlined with a hierarchy of supervision and communication, leaving a number of career opportunities for Maricopa residents. With the acquisition of high occupancy passenger vehicles, he plans to make Maricopa "an example of what a transit service should be."

Mr. Peace explained a bit of his bid proposal, breaking down much of the cost involved with implementing a system such as the city requires. As a relatively small player within a competition among pros, Mr. Peace keeps his costs down by reducing his own salary and many of the creature comforts available to those who run larger companies. While his eventual plan is to grow with this company, he states quite adamantly, "My bid is not a bid to make me rich; rather it is a bid to serve the city that I love."

In cases where goods or services are to be contracted by the city where the cost is less than \$10,000, city code section 3-4-13 states clearly that preference



will always go to organizations that operate within the limits of the city of Maricopa. It goes so far as to say that a local business must receive the contract even if their bid is up to 5% higher than that of the lowest bidding non-local business. In this case, the project is a multi-million dollar program, and not technically subject to this code. However, it is always beneficial to the community that the grant money be channeled back into our local business community.

With such a crucial service in the works, it is imperative that the city council keeps the best interests of the city and community at large their focus when this decision is made. While they have already turned a blind eye to city code with regard to the bidding process, they still have the opportunity to continue to grow and improve our community by putting this grant money to work through a local business.

For more information about MTS' service, rates, and routes, they can be reached at (520) 568-0123 or you can visit them online at www.maricopatrans.com.