

PRESS RELEASE

Oct 3, 2011

### Chandler Tullamore Sister Cities

Links between the Arizona City of Chandler and Tullamore are set to grow in the coming years through the relationship these two locations have through Sister Cities. Chairperson of the Chandler Tullamore Sister Cities Group Tony McCormack commented ; “this twinning is an important step for both locations to grow and develop links that will benefit business, education and cultural links between the two communities. The support of agencies such as Tullamore Town Council, Tullamore & District Chamber of Commerce and Atlantic Corridor has been vital in developing the Sister Cities relationship. Although Arizona isn’t an area most people automatically think of when they of Irish America, Arizona has strong Irish connections in its history and also presently. The Irish greatly contributed to the creation of the territory and state of Arizona due to their enterprising personalities and persistence in a difficult environment. The first documented Irishman in Arizona was Hugo O’ Connor, who established the Presidio of Tucson for the Spanish government in 1775.”

A number of projects are presently underway to build links between the two regions including a joint cookbook project between transition year students at Sacred Heart, Tullamore and Seaton High School, Chandler, recruitment for a Winter Training Camp in 2012 in Chandler for Tullamore Harriers, a business linking programme between Chambers of Commerce in both regions and a number of fora to share best practice from each region. The next such forum is a Technology Workshop with Derek Neighbours of Gangplank, a renowned technology collaborative based in Chandler. This Workshop will take place on November 10<sup>th</sup> in Tullamore and is facilitated by Atlantic Corridor. Future plans for Sister Cities also include the exchange of historical and museum exhibits and also the exchange of books of local interest between libraries.

At an information evening on Chandler held this week in Tullamore, Leah Powell, Diversity Office with Chandler City Council outlined some background to the twinning and also to Chandler itself. Located in the so-called Silicon Desert, Chandler is a city in Maricopa County, Arizona and is a prominent suburb of the Phoenix, Arizona Metropolitan Statistical Area . Leah Powell explained ; “Chandler has had remarkable success in growing from been a small town in the desert, 25 years ago to the world-class location it is today. It has strong clusters of companies in technology and life sciences and a new convergence innovation space is providing opportunities for further growth.”

According to 2010 estimates, the average household income in Chandler was \$84,773, the highest in the Greater Phoenix area. Since 2003, more than 2,900 jobs and investments totalling \$3 billion have been created along the Price and Santan freeways, between Arizona Avenue and Gilbert Road in the so-called South Arizona Avenue Corridor. Major employers in Chandler include Intel, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Verizon, Orbital Sciences, Marvel Technologies, Armorworks and Covance. In her presentation, Leah outlined that the main reason for

Chandler's remarkable success in economic development is long-term strategic planning both in terms of infrastructure, quality of life issues, skills and jobs.

The City has a substantial and active Irish population who have been very active in building links with Tullamore, particularly Champion Irish Dancer Tom Bracken who runs the Bracken School of Irish Dance and Tony Cummins, both natives of Tullamore who are now resident in Chandler.

During her time here, Leah Powell is also working with a number of local schools to build links and to provide an insight into best practice in a range of education issues from Arizona. She is also building links with local government and business agencies.

Cllr Sinead Dooley, Cathaoirleach of Tullamore Town Council commented ; "we are delighted to welcome Leah Powell to Tullamore as a representative of Chandler Sister Cities. We are enthusiastic and excited about the links between our two communities and the benefits that these links will generate. Economic, educational and cultural links between Chandler and Tullamore in the future will benefit both locations. I wish the Sister Cities Group lots of success in their work, particularly with regards to developing links that will benefit education and business."

Further information on Tullamore Chandler Sister Cities can be found on [www.chandlerirish.org](http://www.chandlerirish.org)

\*\*\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*\*\*