

Attractions



(photo courtesy Ajo Chamber of Commerce)

AJO

Ajo is a town of about 4,000 people in southwestern Arizona. Once a copper mining community, Ajo became something of a retirement community in the 1980s after Phelps Dodge stopped mining operations. A recent influx of Border Patrol agents and a contingent of young people who don't want to live anywhere else have kept the town a mix of all ages.

Though sometimes called a "sleepy mining town", Ajo has never been ordinary. Even the name Ajo is different, and a bit of a mystery. Depending on whom you listen to, Ajo (pronounced AH-ho) comes from either a Tohono O'odham word for paint or the Spanish word for garlic.

For a small town, there's lots to do, with activities ranging from softball leagues to a theatre group and from church groups to golf clubs. There are many

opportunities for volunteers who like to stay busy.

Ajo, Arizona, on the map.

Ajo is in the Sonoran Desert, tucked away in Western Pima County in Arizona, about 120 miles southwest of Phoenix and 130 miles west of Tucson. Ajo is landlocked with the Tohono O'odham Nation to the east, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument to the south, and the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and Goldwater Gunnery Range to the north and west.

The desert is far from desolate, with abundant wildlife and plants despite not having much rain. Coyotes howl at the moon, roadrunners zip across highways, desert bighorn sheep climb mountains, and rattlesnakes scare the unwary amid palo verde trees, mesquite, majestic saguaros, and organ pipe cactus. In the spring, wildflowers bloom

in merry profusion while cactus sprout delicate blossoms.

Plaza 1998 in town, desert landscaping prevails, though the green plaza at the center of town is a spot people drive many miles to visit. The Plaza, with its surrounding Arizona Mission-style buildings, was built to be the community's "front yard". The lush grass is bordered by palm trees and other ornamental plantings, with park benches that invite people to sit and visit with friends.

Ajo's climate makes it an ideal cold season retreat. January temperatures average 64° maximum and 40° minimum. July temperatures average 103° maximum and 80° minimum. Yearly rainfall of 8.95" keeps the desert plants and wildlife abundant. Rarely is humidity over 56% and averages 37%. Spectacular sunsets silhouetting the mountains can be seen year-round.

The community has been served by a weekly newspaper, the **Ajo Copper News** www.cunews.info since 1916.

APACHE JUNCTION

Apache Junction and the Superstition Mountains are part and parcel of mystery and adventure... the legends and lore of the Lost Dutchman Gold Mine... a history that includes the prehistoric Ho-

hokam and the Salado cultures as well as Spanish Conquistadors, Apache Warriors, Fur Trappers, Gold Miners, Cattlemen and all those who followed – all drawn by the majesty of the Superstitions.

Apache Junction is just east of Mesa, off the U.S. Highway 60 and intersecting State Highway 88 (the Historic Apache Trail) and the stepping off point for adventure in the Superstitions. The Trail winds its way past Goldfield Ghost Town, the high cliff draped blue waters of Canyon Lake and the old way station of Tortilla Flats. There the pavement ends but the graded trail continues down dizzying Fish Creek Canyon, past Apache Lake and Roosevelt Dam. Past the Dam you can visit Old Globe – once the stomping grounds of famous outlaws like the Apache Kid and visit the antique shops there and in nearby Miami. The journey continues on through the old mining town of Superior and ends, about 135 miles and 8 hours later back in **Apache Junction**.

So many things to do! Trail ride or hike the countless trails. Take the scenic dinner cruise on the **Dolly Steamboat** at Canyon Lake. Tour Goldfield Ghost Town for a taste of 19th century Territorial Arizona or enjoy "The Best Hamburger in the State" at Tortilla Flats. Don't forget to visit



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the **Superstition Mountain Lost Dutchman Museum** to absorb the grandeur of the Alps, the glory of the Rockies, the magnificence of the Grand Canyon and adding an indefinable something that is most awe inspiring and most sublimely beautiful.

Submitted by Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce

ARIZONA CITY

At the Center of It All

Arizona City combines a scenic desert setting with a small town charm, metropolitan convenience and economic opportunity. Nestled amid desert mountains, **Arizona City's** convenient location at a halfway point between Phoenix and Tucson, offers visitors and residents wide-open spaces with the friendliness of a small community and the convenience of nearby metropolitan amenities.

Outdoor attractions include year-round golf on an 18-hole desert course, sailing and fishing at a 48-acre man-made lake, hiking and camping at Picacho Peak State Park (the site of Arizona's only Civil War battle) and Jamestown Wild West Town where gunfight reenactments occur monthly.

Arizona City is an official part of the Juan Bautista de Anza Historic Trail. In 1775 Bautista and his party rested in the area which is now **Arizona City** after having come out of Apache land. The historic trail begins in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico and ends at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Arizona City offers a wide

variety of architectural styles in housing from adobe and classic southwest to contemporary abodes and winter retreats. Here among the sprinkling of cotton fields, agricultural farms and cattle ranches, you'll also find some light industry and family-owned businesses. Western Daze in February each year celebrates our western heritage and brings together our community and others by enjoying a parade, carnival, arts and crafts, and lots of entertainment. We always welcome new neighbors and businesses... come visit and stay awhile!

For additional information, contact the **Arizona City Chamber of Commerce** at (520) 466-5141 or visit our website at www.azcchamber.com

AVONDALE

The story of **Avondale** is so entwined with a place called Coldwater that both stories must be told concurrently. There was a man named Billy Moore who owned a freight station on the west bank of the Agua Fria River which means in Spanish "Cold Water" where he had a well with cold water.

For the river name and his clear, cold water well he called his place Coldwater. Still many old-timers referred to it simply as Billy Moore's. His freight station was near a ranch known as **Avondale**. The railroad established a station a mile west of Coldwater. The station was on the **Avondale** ranch, however it was called



Helzapoppin' PRCA Rodeo (photo courtesy Creative Images by Michael, Buckeye Valley Chamber of Commerce)

Litchfield. A budding metropolis began to form.

When Moore's freight station lost importance the name Coldwater was abandoned. It is not known why the United States Post Office, was established as Coldwater on July 2, 1896 and discontinued October 3, 1896.

On March 23, 1911, the United States Post Office was re-established using the name of **Avondale**, instead of Coldwater. The United States Post Office ruled that a once used post office name could not be re-instated.

BUCKEYE

Thomas Newton Clanton arrived in the area around 1877, bringing his family west from Iowa in search of a better climate for his failing health. Another settler, Malin Monroe Jackson, along with two others began construction on

the canal that was to bring life giving water to the area. Jackson named the canal Buckeye after his home state of Ohio. Ten miles of the canal were completed in 1886, and several small farms were established along the nearby canal.

Thomas Clanton applied to the U.S. Postal Service for the first post office in the area. When the request was granted in 1888 the new station was named **Buckeye** after the canal. Clanton had big plans for a new town.

In September 1888, he teamed with Phoenix surgeon Oscar L. Mahoney to subdivide 160 acres of their land to establish a business district in the new town, then named Sidney. With the all important canal called Buckeye, most of the locals also referred to the town by that name and in 1910, it was officially changed from Sidney to **Buckeye**.

Superstition Mountain Museum




4087 N. Apache Trail (SR 88)
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Elvis Presley Memorial Chapel


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