PHOENIX: Blossoming Sun Belt City Sets Stage for AWCI “Future Is” . . . Convention

In the shadow of the camel . . .
You see the sleeping camel, best at sunset.

The cloudless sky turns orange, yellow and bright red, and the sun casts strange shadows across the sleeping camel, and for awhile you wonder if Camelback Mountain might not slowly get to its feet, stretch, and walk off through the desert.

Then the sun disappears and the lights come on, and now the outlines of the mountain against the evening sky reminds you of a prize-winning photograph.

And all the time, lying at the side of the sleeping Camel Mountain, there is PHOENIX.

There’s nothing unusual about AWCI holding its (the Future Is . . .) convention and exposition in Phoenix. There’s been a trend towards the future in this Southwestern city for decades, and the same spirit prevails in the aims and goals of AWCI.

According to ancient mythology, every five hundred years the Phoenix bird burned itself and its nest, then rose from the ashes more beautiful than before. Look to your left as you enter the east terminal of the Phoenix Airport. A splendid, colorful mural tells you the whole story.

Centuries before the Christian era, the prehistoric Hohokan Indians came from the south with stone hoes and a knowledge of irrigation. They were farmers.

Their canals and their vast irrigation system exists today, with improvements here or there in the past few hundred years. These waterways of melted, mountain snow cross the
city and suburbs carrying water to agricultural areas, to Phoenix, and to outlying communities.

Wild Grass Starts Economy

The west is still young in some respects, but Spanish towns existed before the Pilgrims stepped on the rock in Massachusetts. In 1885, Phoenix, on the flowing Salt River, was a mere trail-stop between Prescott and Tucson. It turned out to be the wild grass growing among the prehistoric canals that gave the first settlers pause. The grass was cut and sold to the cavalry at nearby Ft. McDowell, thus becoming the first major trading commodity of the area.

And Phoenix was underway. By 1870, a town site was laid-out, and a speculator bought the first lot for $104. The site had several names, such as Pumpkin Center, until an Englishman suggested “Phoenix.” He pointed out that Phoenix would rise from the ruins and ashes of the ancient Hohokan Indians. And so it has.

For 60 years Phoenix struggled along as a dusty cow town, an agricultural center with cactus and tumbleweed at its doorstep. By the end of World War II, the word was out and the beautiful state capital city had to face up to an explosion that hit a population of 1.3 million people in 1978.

The pistol-packing cowboys, the dusty streets, the saloons, and the warpath indians, all that is gone. What you find instead, sprawling through the Valley of the Sun, is a major American metropolis late in the 20th century, built outward not upward, with a hint of eastern sophistication with a full flavoring of the modern west.

Culture. History. Space . . . room to walk, green parks, broad avenues, blue skys. Space that gives you room enough to breathe, room enough to slow-down the beat of your heart, room enough to smile at a neighbor. Room enough to live.

Yet, the feel and enchantment of the west is still there. You see cowboys and Indians on the street. The state-decreed official neck-wear is the “bola tie” adorned with tur-
Old Scottsdale's unique shops offer a variety of handi- crafts. Many are working shops with artists actually creating their wares as you browse.

The famous Phoenix bird symbolizes growth and rebirth. According to legend, the bird burned itself every 500 years only to rise from its ashes more beautiful than before.

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The weather is close to perfect and the life-style of the inhabitants reflect this. The Valley of the Sun splendidly lives up to its name with an average of 300 bright and sunny days a year. The average daily temperature for the month of March, and the AWCI Convention dates, are a high of 85° during the day and 45° at night.

Outdoor sports are a way of life here, with over 1,000 tennis courts and 68 golf courses to choose from. Swimming, horseback riding and mountain climbing are also popular sports.

Phoenix has everything. From nationally famous and glamorous department stores to delightful hidden-away shops and craft centers of every description; from participation sports (golf and tennis) to spectator sports at Arizona State University and professional basketball, tennis, and hockey teams; from elegant resort hotels to small, charming adobe inns; from beautiful, elegant restaurants to intimate Western ethnic cafes.

Places To Go And Things To See

So Phoenix is the heart of it . . . but Phoenix isn’t all. Right next door sharing a view of the sleeping camel, is Scottsdale. Golf courses, shopping plazas, a city filled with sculpture, homes as stately as those in Palm Beach, ranches as chic as those in Palm Springs, a performing arts center that rates as one of the most modern in the nation.

Excursions to some out-of-the-way sites are a good way to appreciate the uniqueness of Arizona. The trip north to Cave Creek climbs 1,000 feet above Phoenix to this 1870 frontier town. You’re now in tall saguaro (pronounced sawaro) cactus country. Where cactus grows larger and taller
than anywhere. National Geographic has described this route as one of the “most beautiful drives in the world.”

Near Cave Creek is the famous planned community of Carefree. Here expensive homes are built among huge boulders, on ridges and ravines. This is “high desert” where the saguaro are immense.

Residents and visitors alike enjoy side trips to Taliesin West, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Western School of Architecture, and the Paolo Soleri’s Cosanti School of Architecture, where you can see the model for a 30,000-population domed city of the future, as well as a bell foundry where sculptures and patio wind-bells are cast.

Arizona is known for the records of its prehistoric past through the stone and adobe homes of the Hohokan Indians. Some lived in the mountains and canyons as cliff dwellers, others on flat lands. The people disappeared around 1400 A.D., and no one knows why they left or where they went. However, one village which is well-worth visiting is that of Pueblo Grande Museum near 48th Street and Washington. Nearby is the Papago City Park; it’s nothing like any park you have ever seen. This is a high, rolling desert area of washes with towering red buttes. Centuries of wind erosion have started a natural bridge at one point—“hole in the wall.”

To get a quick insight of the history and the culture of the southwest, there can be nothing like a little time spent at Heard Museum of Anthropology of Primitive Art, located north on Central Avenue close to downtown Phoenix. The structural design, courtyards and Indian wall decorations add to the feeling of the southwest, and that’s why its called the “Indian Museum.” Started in 1929, it has doubled in size to include more than 50,000 catalog artifacts, including the oldest known piece of southwest Hohokan pottery dated approximately 300 B.C.

On permanent display as a gift to the Heard Museum is Senator and Mrs. Barry Goldwater’s Kachina Doll collection, a delight to see and read about. A Kachina is a Hopi god or spirit that is carved and decorated in the form of a doll for children as a way of learning the religious mores of the tribe. Adult males wear the same costumes during the performance of religious rites and tribal ceremonies.

The Heard Museum is a must.

**Buckle Up The Sun Belt**

Phoenix has been and is in a dynamic growth surge. You’ll feel it during your visit in March. You’ll hear it and see it. Perhaps, no one has better expressed Phoenix’s rapid growth than a western columnist who wrote “those who invent catch-all phrases have coined another label for our country’s southern region: ‘The Sun Belt’. And if there is a belt, Phoenix has become the buckle.”

Here’s bidding you a warm welcome in March to Phoenix, the Buckle of the Sun Belt, and the Valley of the Sun.