

valley&state

Metro News: 602-444-NEWS metronews@arizonarepublic.com

Mayor wants action on immigration

By Erin Kelly
Republic Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Mesa Mayor Scott Smith said this week that he is worried that time is running out for Congress to fix the “economic and human tragedy” of the nation’s badly broken immigration system.

“My biggest concern is that we do nothing,” the Republican mayor and possible gubernatorial candidate told reporters in the Gannett/USA Today Washington Bureau on Tuesday. “The status quo is unacceptable.”

Smith, president of the non-partisan U.S. Conference of Mayors, is visiting the nation’s capital this week to attend meetings and talk with reporters to promote the group’s priorities.

Immigration is one of the mayors’ top concerns, Smith said.

The impact of illegal immigration falls hardest on cities such as Mesa that are home to undocumented immigrants, Smith said.

Mayors have complained that immigrants who are in the country illegally live in the

shadows and cannot become fully contributing members of the community. Smith said employers in Mesa also tell him that they want to bring in engineers and other high-skilled workers from other countries to expand their businesses but are stymied by restrictions in the current visa system.

“We want the system fixed,” Smith said. “We recognize that a broken system hurts us all.”

Politically, any bill that has a chance of passage must address border security to win Republican votes and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants to win Democratic votes, Smith said.

The Senate passed a sweeping immigration-reform bill in late June that would double the number of Border Patrol agents on the southwestern border, bring in more foreign high-tech workers, require employers to verify their workers’ legal status through a federal database, and provide a pathway to citizenship for the approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States.

The House has not voted on



Mesa Mayor Scott Smith is in Washington.

“You can call immigration reform ‘amnesty’ and reject it, but my answer to that is: Then what? What do you do with 11 million people?”

SCOTT SMITH
Mayor of Mesa, talking about what he describes as America’s broken immigration system

its own legislation. Activists on both sides of the issue say the chances of reform passing the full Congress will drop dramatically if the House does not act before the election season begins in 2014.

Smith is frustrated by the ideological fighting in Congress on immigration and wants lawmakers to come up with pragmatic, bipartisan solutions.

“You can call immigration reform ‘amnesty’ and reject it, but my answer to that is: Then what? What do you do with 11 million people?” he said.

Smith, who arrived in Washington late Monday, the day of the mass shooting at the Navy Yard, said he also hopes Congress will revisit the issue of background checks for gun buyers.

“I would like to see a much more vibrant discussion on what do we do to keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill, children and criminals,” he said.

At the same time, Congress should not take any action that would infringe on the constitutional right of Americans to bear arms, Smith said.

“We have to tread very lightly,” he said.

Turning to fiscal issues, Smith said that mayors are worried that Congress will try to dig its way out of the federal government’s budget woes by ending or reducing the tax exemption on municipal bonds. Those bonds are used to pay for schools, hospitals, mass transit, water and sewer facilities, roads and public power plants.

Mayors worry that fewer people will invest in municipal bonds if they have to pay federal income tax on the interest they earn, Smith said. Some tax-reform plans being considered by Congress and the Obama administration would eliminate the tax-exempt status for municipal bonds.

“As long as this proposal has a pulse, we’re going to fight it,” Smith said.

Regarding his own political future, the mayor said he will decide in the next few months whether he will seek the GOP nomination for governor in 2014.

Smith said he is often asked whether he is too moderate to win the Republican nomination in Arizona. The mayor said he thinks of himself as a “pragmatic conservative” who could present an alternative to the fierce partisanship that has caused legislative gridlock in Phoenix and Washington.

“I think people are tired of just having ideologues debate without doing anything to solve problems,” Smith said. “I just want to get things done. I think most mayors are like that.”

Republican rancher says he will seek Kirkpatrick’s seat

By Rebekah L. Sanders
The Republic | azcentral.com

Gary Kiehne, a northern Arizona rancher and oilman, is the second Republican to announce his intention to unseat Democratic U.S. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick.

Kiehne launched his campaign for the 1st Congressional District on Tuesday. GOP state lawmaker Adam Kwasman, who lives near Tucson, said this summer he is exploring a run.

Kiehne said he understands the needs of the rural district where he grew up and plans to focus on job creation, minimizing regulations, cutting taxes and protecting land rights.

“I’m a businessman at heart. I understand how to create jobs. I understand how taxes affect businesses,” Kiehne said in an interview. “I’ve put these things to work for myself. Now I’m ready to put them to work for the rest of the state.”

He pledged to fight environmental groups that file lawsuits to halt logging in Arizona’s forests, leading to overgrowth and fire danger.

Kiehne hails from Springerville, not far from where Kirkpatrick grew up. A cattle rancher and rodeo roper, he got into oil and gas in Texas and owns three hotels in eastern Arizona. He is a member of the National Rifle Association and promised to defend Second Amendment rights. He is expected to be able to self-fund much of his campaign.

Kiehne said he didn’t know much about Kirkpatrick. “I think she’s probably a good lady.”

“But the bottom line is, if we have a meeting, you can ask me

any question you want to, and I promise I won’t pack up and leave,” Kiehne said, referencing a 2009 episode when Kirkpatrick left a constituent event that had turned contentious.

Kirkpatrick has since held numerous events with constituents and worked with Republicans in some cases, for instance, by co-sponsoring a bill with Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., to allow a major copper mine to be built in her district.

The legislation is scheduled for a House vote this week.

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee spokesman Matt Inzeo said Kiehne’s entrance in the Republican primary sets up a “the race to the far right.”

He said the GOP candidates promise “Arizona families more of the Washington partisan gridlock that is hurting their pocketbooks.”

The race for Congressional District 1 will likely be tough.

The district has slightly more Democratic voters, but it often swings for Republicans, including going for Mitt Romney in last year’s presidential race.

Kirkpatrick was elected in 2008, ousted in the “tea party” wave of 2010 and returned to Congress in the last election as President Barack Obama helped drive Democratic turnout. Republicans are hoping to replicate their 2010 midterm success and reclaim Kirkpatrick’s seat next year.

based subcontractor so that the dam would be built locally.

“That provides Arizona jobs on a pretty huge capital (infrastructure) job,” Kulaga said. “It also vastly reduces the transportation costs of these heavy steel gates.”

Manufacturing would start around January, followed by installation and construction in about April.

Tempe is on track to complete the project in time to meet a December 2015 deadline to remove the temporary west-end rubber dam that is on loan from Bridgestone Industrial Products Inc.

A legal agreement between Bridgestone and Tempe requires the city to remove the temporary dam by the deadline or face fines.

“Beginning January 2015, should the (loaned rubber) bladders still be in operation, that contract calls for us to pay rent for those at \$300,000 a month,” Kulaga said. “So, we have a clear incentive and a clear finish line of December 28, 2015.”

Judge begins hearing arguments in mental-health contract battle

By Mary K. Reinhart
The Republic | azcentral.com

An administrative law judge began hearing arguments Wednesday in the dispute over a \$3 billion contract to run the public behavioral-health-care system in Maricopa County.

Magellan Health Services, which has struggled to administer care amid deep budget cuts and which has been criticized for its out-of-state corporate ownership, lost the contract after six years.

The company, based in Connecticut, wants several days to present as many as 88 witnesses and more than 500 exhibits to argue that the bidding process for the nation’s largest public behavioral-health contract was rigged in favor of the winner, Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care.

The Arizona Department of Health Services awarded the three-year contract in March, choosing Mercy Maricopa, a partnership between Maricopa Integrated Health System, the county’s safety-net health system, and insurer Mercy Care Plan, over Magellan, which holds the current contract.

The new pact will be the state’s first integrated-health program, which blends physical

and mental-health care.

In a court filing this week, attorneys for Mercy Maricopa, the ADHS and the state’s Medicaid program accused Magellan of dragging out the dispute.

“Put quite directly, allowing Magellan to chew up all the hearing time simply is not fair,” attorney Andrew Gordon wrote. “Magellan has no interest in resolving this matter expeditiously or at all. As long as it can keep this case alive, it can hope to continue to hold on to its lucrative contract.”

At the end of the hearing, Judge Diane Mihalsky will issue a recommendation to the state Department of Administration, which has final say over the contract award. Either side could then appeal in Maricopa County Superior Court.

In its protest, Magellan said that the bids were improperly scored and that the team that evaluated them was biased in favor of Mercy Maricopa. Magellan also has filed suit against Maricopa Integrated Health Systems, alleging that it disclosed confidential information to secure the deal.

Magellan has managed mental-health and substance-abuse treatment for the county’s poor since 2007, covering roughly 70,000 people, including about

12,000 adults with serious mental illness. They are served through networks of clinics and local providers.

The ADHS has extended Magellan’s contract, which was to have ended Oct. 1, until March 31 because of Magellan’s appeal.

Arizona contracts with four administrative agencies to manage the state’s mental-health system and provide medication, counseling, case management and crisis services.

The for-profit Magellan Health Services gets about one-quarter of its revenue from the Arizona contract.

State health officials have said Mercy Maricopa presented the best community-based approach, but they weren’t surprised that Magellan protested the award given the size of the contract.

George Galliher, a longtime mental-health advocate, attended part of Wednesday’s hearing and said the outcome is about more than just money.

“It’s a billion dollars that can make a tremendous difference in the lives of 100,000 people here in this county,” he said.

Reach the reporter at maryk.reinhart@arizonarepublic.com.

Wright

Continued from Page B1

Wright’s “learning by doing” principle at Wisconsin’s Taliesin and the complex of low-slung rock, wood and concrete buildings at Scottsdale’s Taliesin West.

For the past six months, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and school leadership have studied how to maintain Wright’s experiential-learning method and intend to refine a plan later this week.

A broad outline of the plan that officials are willing to share is to create a school that continues to offer a Master of Architecture, but in combination with a new residential-research program for architecture professionals.

As with previous changes over the decades, former students or fellows are wary about changes in the storied program.

The foundation, said Eric Lloyd Wright, Wright’s grandson and a California architect, has lost much with Wright’s archives leaving Taliesin West for Columbia University and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City last year, the dissolution of the for-profit architecture firm Taliesin Architects a decade ago, and the ceding of the fellowship’s governing powers in 2007.

Wright didn’t have a degree and wasn’t a fan of formal education, his grandson said. Eric Wright, now 83, apprenticed for his grandfather from 1948 to 1956. “Graduation” was a letter of recommendation from Frank Lloyd Wright, he said.

Yet Eric Wright doesn’t want to see the school separate from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation.

Although he’s not opposed to advancing education among professional architects and designers, Wright said, the school should fight to keep educating young architects.

“You want to train students to become architects,” he said. “If they come in afterward and have their degree, they might not have been exposed to the practicing of organic architecture. It would be a secondary thing and not as important.”

Vernon Swaback, who studied under Frank Lloyd Wright and served as president of the Wright Foundation board before resigning in 2005, said what’s decided for the school is critical lest Taliesin West “degenerate into nothing but one more tourist attraction.”

In addition to housing the school, Taliesin West served as the late Wright’s winter home and studio, houses some of his oldest students and now offers daily tours to more than 100,000 people a year.

“The potential remains for it to become a global gathering place for the best and the brightest to give their best under the spell and spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin West,” Swaback said.

The school leadership believes a new program will strengthen Wright’s legacy.

“What we would do differently is really have the residential factor of living on-site, people from age 20 to age 90, all passionate about architecture and a lot of the principles that Wright espoused,” said Maura Grogan,

who chairs the Frank Lloyd Wright School’s board of governors.

“Everyone is learning from each other,” she said.

“We think we can do it in a way that has a different impact and an important impact in changing the conversation around architecture and how architects should be.”

A consultant has been hired to explore the academic and business planning of potential changes to the school.

Even if accreditation status is ensured and the school continues to offer a Master of Architecture degree, the foundation still is seeking to transform the school into a “revitalized, re-focused and robust cross-disciplinary Taliesin Fellowship,” Malone said.

Malone became CEO of the foundation last year, six months before the announcement that Wright’s archives were moving.

That decision came after the foundation had begun to climb out of debt. In 2009, the non-profit foundation showed a deficit of more than \$1.5 million; in 2011, the foundation finished with a surplus of \$2.6 million.

The foundation’s hope is that it continues to oversee the school as it supports the program through its licensing of Wright copyright designs and tours of Taliesin West and Taliesin in Wisconsin.

Although the foundation overall has turned around its finances, the architectural school has operated at a deficit. In 2011, the expenses were \$1.17 million, and revenue was a little more than \$727,000, according to the foundation’s federal tax documents.

Town Lake

Continued from Page B1

cash and will issue bonds to fund the remainder of the costs.

The total project cost is estimated at \$40.7 million, Assistant City Manager Jeff Kulaga told *The Arizona Republic* on Wednesday.

The engineering design of the proposed steel structure, made of eight gates, each spanning 106 feet and weighing 232,000 pounds, is about 70 percent complete.

If the council approves the \$12.4 million design-and-manufacturing contract with SteelFab Inc. today, then Gannett Fleming Inc., the engineering contractor for the project, will work with the manufacturer to finalize specifics of the design.

The construction contract, estimated at \$22 million, is expected to go before the council in October.

Kulaga said that SteelFab would work with a Phoenix-