Planning Center celebrates 25 years

By Roger Yohem, Inside Tucson Business
Published on Friday, March 26, 2010

Planning Center is 25

In the 25 years since its first project - the La Paloma Master Plan in the Catalina Foothills - The Planning Center has done work for over 675 clients throughout the Southwest and Mexico. Owner Mike Grassinger credits their success to their versatility and a mindset that encourages employees to be active in the community.

"Being involved, we're on good terms with all interested stakeholders in the community. We have excellent relations with the neighborhoods, environmental groups, developers, and governments," Grassinger said.

As staffers work on projects, they carry forth the center's focus on balancing good land use and natural resource conservation. As a result, they have done "the lion's share" of master-planned communities in Southern Arizona. The firm also did the original General Plan for Marana and Sahuarita, as well as parts of the city and county's general plans.

Jack Neubeck and Linda Morales are co-owners. They are company principals along with Maria Masque. Their 15-member staff includes urban planners and designers, landscape architects, GIS specialists, and graphic artists.

The Planning Center originated in California. Its Tucson franchise was purchased in 2000 as an independent, locally owned operation. Currently, the firm is working on master plans for the University of Arizona Science and Technology Park at Interstate 10 and Rita Road on the southeast side, and the UA BioScience Park at 36th Street and Kino Parkway on the southside.

Past projects have included work for the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gladden Farms, Foothills Mall, Cottonwood Properties, Diamond Ventures, Raven Golf and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

"We came to Tucson as a master planning expert. We continued doing that, our linchpin of success, as we diversified," said Grassinger. "That reputation helped us become strong in both the public and private sector."