

**DRAFT**

2009 Gilbert Mayoral Race

# **The Need for New Leadership**

*"What We Do, We Do Together!"*

**Prepared by**

**John Lewis  
2009 Candidate for Mayor  
Town of Gilbert**

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February 2009

To the Citizens of Gilbert,

Six candidates seek the seat of Mayor of Gilbert in an upcoming March primary election. All six candidates have made similar statements that our most pressing short-term Town issue is the recessionary economy and our Budget Deficit. To maintain our quality of life, our core Town services are to remain our priorities with police and fire funding at the top. Emphasis will continue on maintaining a community with strong family values, fiscal accountability, and quality education programs.

Three candidates are currently serving or have served on the Council. The three who have not served on the Council are making the case for new leadership. I am one of those candidates.

Other than the challenges of addressing our budget crisis and for many of our families the trials of unemployment and home foreclosures, on the surface, for most of us, our quality of life in Gilbert remains positive. We love Gilbert because of the "small town feel" and our parks, libraries, open space, trails and bike paths. We are interconnected with a growing single adult population, young families, and established families that have farmed our land where our homes now reside. Our priorities are firm as they revolve around family, freedom, education, and public safety.

With limited opportunities to contribute responses to questions to the newspaper requests (usually to be 100 words or less), and the need to limit answers to questions to one or two minutes in public forums, I have not adequately answered the question: "Why does Gilbert need new leadership?"

This document provides important answers with an emphasis on the need for leadership now to properly plan for the future sustainability of our Town--with the right balance of large and small businesses and residential areas. During the next two years, we will be updating our Town's General Plan. This version of the Plan will become the blueprint for the final build-out of our Town. If our final build-out focuses entirely on welcoming 100,000 new friends and neighbors into residential areas without inviting new businesses to join, we will fail because we will remain a "bedroom community." Bedroom communities die because they are not economically diverse and sustainable. If we remain a "bedroom community," we will not have the necessary revenue stream and local jobs to remain a vibrant, attractive community.

My vision for the future is focused on this critical topic:

## Town Sustainability

To explain my vision, I have prepared a three-page document titled "The Need for New Leadership" with an emphasis on the following strategic themes that relate to Town Sustainability:

Open for Business  
High Skilled Jobs  
Live, Work, Play Community  
Small Town Feel

I then summarize 46 Plans/Pledges in two sections to provide specifics on the leadership that I will provide as the Mayor of Gilbert:

- Section 1: Specific Plans/Pledges for Business & Economic Development
- Section 2: Additional Plans/Pledges to Lead the Town of Gilbert

These 46 Plans/Pledges have been compiled based on feedback provided from the citizens of Gilbert through a campaign survey and interaction with Gilbert citizens in neighborhood meetings held all over Gilbert during the last eight weeks.

I appreciate your willingness to review my vision and my "leadership thinking" and to join me in preparing for the future of our sustainable community—our Town of Gilbert. "What We do, We do together!"

Sincerely,

John Lewis  
2009 Candidate for Mayor  
Town of Gilbert

# **The Need for New Leadership**

“When we talk to business owners who are outside of Arizona about considering future locations for their businesses in the valley, Gilbert is not even considered a player!”

*Arizona Development Company*

## Building a Sustainable Community

During the next two years, we must complete the Town strategic task to update our General Plan. Our first Town General Plan was created in the mid '80s. On a periodic basis, by law, the Town of Gilbert should review, update, and determine through an extensive public input process whether to amend the General Plan to reflect changing needs and conditions. We are beginning the process of reviewing our General Plan in 2009. This opportunity will not only impact our strategic Town direction for the next few years, but what we decide in this version of the General Plan will become our blueprint for the final build-out of Gilbert.

If our final build-out focuses entirely on welcoming 100,000 new friends and neighbors into residential areas without inviting new businesses to join, we will fail because we will remain a “bedroom community.” Bedroom communities die because they are not economically diverse and sustainable. We may continue to have a “small town feel” but we will not have the necessary revenue stream and local jobs to remain a vibrant, attractive community.

The necessary revenue stream to sustain our Town in the future requires the right balance of revenue sources from homeowners paying for capital expenditures, small businesses succeeding and generating sales tax revenue, and larger businesses providing tax revenue to help fund our local education system. In addition, larger businesses bring “indirect revenue” to our community. “Indirect revenue” also known as the “multiplier effect” is sometimes hard to quantify. When a business locates in a Town, they can bring high-skilled jobs with workers who purchase homes and support the local economy with their spending on consumables. This spending is part of the multiplier effect that benefits small businesses. With the right balance of large business, small business, and citizens living in residential areas, our Town can be sustainable.

As we emphasize that Gilbert is “Open for Business” and create a “Work, Live, and Play” community, we can still enjoy what attracted so many to our Town. Based on our recent Town survey, we understand the significance of the number one reason

cited by the citizens for satisfaction of living in Gilbert--our small town atmosphere. My vision focuses on maintaining our "small town feel" by locating larger businesses with high skilled jobs in "employment corridors" on vacant land along the 202 freeway and near the entrance to the Gateway Airport. By doing this, we can preserve the "small town feel" in residential areas to the north and south with small businesses available to support our neighborhoods with nearby services.

### Challenge

Our challenge in attracting larger businesses can best be described with a recent comment made by a large Arizona development group that helps businesses find locations for their expanding needs. They said:

"When we talk to business owners who are outside of Arizona about considering future locations for their businesses in the valley, Gilbert is not even considered a player!"

"Why, I ask?" Their answers were summarized with several comments. Many years ago, all the cities and towns in the Valley competed against Scottsdale. When a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) planned to move his business to the Valley, he/she typically viewed Scottsdale as the ideal place to purchase a home and subsequently wanted the business nearby. Times changed, and while Scottsdale continued to do well with new businesses, Chandler became an example of a nearby city that successfully attracted larger businesses.

"How did they do it?" In the opinion of the development company, the most important step taken by Chandler was for the City Council, the City Business Development Team, and the local business leaders to join together in a unified approach to attract new businesses. They worked together to create a common vision with specific goals.

While our Gilbert Economic Development Board (GEDAB) has a solid strategy for business development, we are not unified with Town leadership in our approach to attract larger businesses. To meet the challenge of organizing our efforts to attract new businesses to Gilbert, we need a vision, a common goal, and a united team of Town Council members, Town Development Staff and local business leaders.

## Opportunities

We are a prime location for companies to consider locating in Gilbert. We have the highest median income in the State except for Paradise Valley. We are highly educated—more than 34% of our residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Our median age is 30 years old. Gilbert is a fun, clean, pleasant, safe and beautiful place to live.

As mentioned, we have specific corridors that are ideal for large businesses to absorb/invest in our General Plan and allow our residential areas to maintain the "small town feel." The two main corridors are along our 202 Freeway and the entrance to the Gateway Airport (with a few other strategic areas of our Town).

In addition to the need to focus on our continued short-term problems with our Town budget deficit, as Mayor, in thinking ahead, I will make our Town Business Development efforts my number one priority. It will be my number one priority because the future sustainability of our Town depends on it.

The process of bringing large businesses to a city or town is long and laborious; quick fixes will not be the answer. While many businesses may delay growth plans during our nation's economic crisis, there are still many open doors and the need to make economic development a priority can not be postponed. In addition to new business opportunities with Health Care companies that are considering locating near our three hospitals, our Town Business Development Team is focused on attracting businesses with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines. I support these efforts and I emphasize the opportunity for our Town to welcome a large, upcoming business sector called "Clean and Renewable Energy" (Solar Energy—converting sunlight into electricity).

The renewable energy industry is one of the few growing sectors in today's troubled economy. Estimates from Navigant Consulting and discussions at the Greater Phoenix Economic Council include:

- U.S. solar-related investments will increase by \$232 B by 2016
- 276,000 solar-support jobs will be created by 2016
- California is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, and is expected to become the largest renewable energy market in the world
- Arizona's proximity to California can lead to Arizona being a big winner in supplying California's solar technology and energy

Currently there are three main types of solar manufacturing facilities that potentially could be built in Gilbert. The economic benefits are outlined as follows:

<u>Type of Manufacturer</u>	<u>Jobs</u>	<u>Revenues*</u>	<u>Space/Land Requirement</u>
Photovoltaics	400	\$78.6 M	200,000 SF, 20 acres
Thin-Film	700	\$104.1 M	400,000 SF, 40 acres
Glass	150	\$18.2 M	150,000 SF, 15 acres

*\*Revenues estimates are over a 10 year period and would be divided between State, County, Town, and School Districts*

Any one of the above facilities would be equivalent to an Intel plant with high-skilled jobs entering our Town with green technology that will not pollute our air. These jobs would align with our Business Development Team's desire to find attractive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics companies and skills to our Town.

For our Town to effectively pursue business opportunities that will benefit Gilbert in the future, we need a leader who can bring the Town Council, Town Business Development Team, and local business leaders together. That is our first step. And that will be my first priority as Mayor.

The benefits of this approach to attract new businesses to Gilbert will have the following effects:

- Create a vision together with common goals
- Align the Town and Business community to work together and not follow separate agendas that may be contradictory
- Prepare a plan for the future with a Mayor who will make economic development his first priority (which for the Gilbert of 2029 will have been the most important assignment that the Mayor of 2009 could have performed)

## **Section 1: Specific Plans/Pledges for Business & Economic Development**

Prepared by John Lewis, Mayoral Candidate, Town of Gilbert

“John Lewis is the only candidate with a proven track record in business and finance. His 28 years of private sector business experience will be an asset to our Town to safely guide Gilbert through these tough economic times. His energy will help us open new doors to attract new businesses to Gilbert and retain our current ones as we prepare for our future Town sustainability.”

*Kris Thompson, Gilbert Economic and Development Advisory Board, Chairman*

### Leadership for New Business/Economic Development

I will organize our Town efforts to attract new businesses by doing the following:

1. Assigning the Mayor and one member of the Town Council to serve on the Gilbert Economic Development Advisory Board (GEDAB).
2. Maintaining the past GEDAB meeting frequency of monthly meetings (the 2009 plan is to move to quarterly meetings).
3. Setting a deadline of 90 days to prepare a Strategic Direction Plan for attracting large businesses to Gilbert. This plan will be created, discussed and agreed to by (with input from local business leaders):
  - The Town Council
  - The Town Business Development Team
  - GEDAB (which includes leaders of our Chamber of Commerce)
4. Invite retired and current business executives to join and participate in a "New Business Think Tank" to meet quarterly with the specific purpose of sharing ideas and networking together on how to attract new business to Gilbert (we will enlist members of the NB Think Tank to function as ambassadors for the Town with our efforts).

My efforts to make economic development my priority for the future of Gilbert will be to complete the following tasks:

5. Champion "Clean and Renewable Solar Energy" as a new business development opportunity for our community.
6. Serve as salesman, marketer, ambassador, and statesman with our Town Business Development Team as we pursue additional new business opportunities with business disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
7. Serve as an advocate to preserve and expand the ASU Polytechnic Campus and the Chandler Gilbert Community College Campuses and include these educational institutions in plans for the skill development of future graduates to potentially work for businesses located in Gilbert.
8. Foster new and better relationships with our neighboring cities and towns to leverage opportunities that will benefit our Region including creating new enthusiasm and increased support for developing Phoenix Gateway Airport as a major employment center.
9. Create a web site specifically focused on attracting businesses. Our current Town web site is oriented to our citizens and not designed for business development. *(A suggested name for the web site is: [www.GilbertisOpenforBusiness.com](http://www.GilbertisOpenforBusiness.com) )*
10. Champion the acceleration of the building of infrastructure around Big League Dreams to take advantage of available land that should have Gilbert restaurants and hotels *(to avoid the current need for visitors to stay and eat in Mesa)*
11. Lead efforts to bring a major league baseball team to Gilbert for spring training to complement the Big League Dreams complex; this effort will include networking with Japanese baseball players who use Gilbert as a training facility in the off-season *(Note: I am fluent in Japanese and will be able to help with our marketing effort; also, I am working with two local Gilbert residents with baseball contacts to begin opening doors)*.
12. Encourage an additional city from Japan to join our "Sister Cities" program.
13. Open discussion with Town leaders and the Chamber of Commerce on whether to identify a foreign trade zone in our Town *(Note: Merchandise that is shipped to foreign countries from a Foreign Trade Zone is exempt from duty payments. This provision is especially useful to companies that import components in order to manufacture finished products for export)*.

## Leadership for Small Businesses

“John Lewis has the ability and passion to open and foster the lines of communication between small businesses and Town leadership. John Lewis represents an unparalleled vision in our Town; and he has the energy to see that vision through.”

*Lisa Rigler, Gilbert Small Business Alliance Board Member*

In listening to our small businesses owners, a variety of issues and frustrations have been shared. Another reason to support the need for new leadership is that these issues have been expressed for many years without improvement. Frustrations include inefficient Town processes, long delays in receiving approval on projects, surprise costs that were not properly communicated, and a “one size fits all” business approach to providing Town services. In addition to emphasizing new business, it will be equally as important to emphasize retaining business. As Mayor, I will do the following:

14. Invite at least two dozen small business owners including both members and non-members of the Chamber of Commerce and Gilbert Small Business Alliance (GSBA) to attend a “Small Business Summit.” Those who participate will meet with and present issues to me and the Town employees who are most responsible for the current culture.

Out of this very important event a list of action items that the Town can do to improve its small business culture will be created. I will then follow-up systematically and regularly with the “Summit” participants to ensure that assignments are completed.

I anticipate that there may be a need to modify rules, procedures, and codes along with attitudes. Guiding organizational change is one of my strong leadership skills that has been part of my past and current business experience. I look forward to this opportunity to make Gilbert “business friendly” as we focus on both attracting and retaining our small businesses. I also plan to discuss strategic ways to diversify our sales tax revenue sources.

15. Organize a quarterly meeting with Town staff and small business leaders to discuss current issues, assess our “business friendly” progress, and focus on creative ways to strengthen the Town/Small Business partnership.
16. Invite local technology experts to join and participate in a “Business Internet Think Tank” to meet quarterly with specific purposes, such as:
  - Sharing ideas and networking together on how to help retain and expand our small businesses use the internet to communicate to Gilbert citizens their services.
  - Expanding the market of our small businesses outside of Gilbert.

17. Encourage small business owners to take advantage of entrepreneurial learning activities and seek additional ways to promote business networking and small business coaching.
18. Actively participate in Chamber of Commerce and GSBA meetings and gatherings.
19. Identify an Ombudsman contact for business owners to approach with questions, concerns, and ideas. (*I understand from the GSBA that this will be especially helpful for business owners to have someone walk them through processes involved with the Town and that GSBA feels that this can be a volunteer position through their organization*).
20. Enhance our Town efforts to market the theme "Shop Gilbert." (*This theme is known, but it needs additional support to become a real part of our Town culture.*)
21. Assign Town staff to spread the word through Small Business organizations and through allocating part of the Town's communications budget that we are a community that gives tremendous support to the Small Business community. (*The efforts noted above will be newsworthy and good for public relations.*)

## **Section 2: Additional Plans/Pledges to Lead our Town**

Prepared by John Lewis, Mayoral Candidate, Town of Gilbert

"As Gilbert's former Town Manager from 1983 to 2001, I had the opportunity to work with 36 town council members and six mayors. I sincerely appreciate the service of all of these dedicated elected officials. That being said and with all due respect to our current Mayor and Town council members, I wholeheartedly endorse John Lewis for Mayor. He has exactly the kind of ethics, values and business credentials needed for the next chapter of Gilbert's continuing development as a great place to live, work and play. He is truly a consensus builder with years of service on Gilbert's interfaith council and on the Town's Diversity Taskforce. He has the business background to lead the community back to prosperity. I have known John for 24 years and I know that he will serve with integrity and make fairness and the respect of others hallmarks of his service as Mayor."

*Kent Cooper, Gilbert Town Manager (1983-2001)*

### Personal Leadership

I understand the statement, "you cannot lift another, until you lift yourself." As the Mayor, I realize the importance of leading by example and representing the Town with integrity. Knowing that the Mayor is a symbol of our Town, I will:

- Listen to learn
- Instill a culture of trust with the Mayor's Office
- Treat those I meet with respect and dignity
- Serve as a positive ambassador for our Town
- Restore relationships with local, county, and state officials

## Community Leadership

As a community leader, my philosophy will be the following:

- Create vision with the involvement of others
- Communicate plans to our citizens and find new ways to involve a larger number of citizen voices
- Find new ways to recognize our citizens for their accomplishments
- Build upon my past efforts to foster tolerance and understanding among all ethnic and religious groups.
- Emphasize "WE" and not "I" or "me"

My personal mantra is: "What We do, We do together." To lead our community I understand the power of WE. My pledge to our community is that WE will work together to do the following:

- Maintain the role of government to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens.
- Ensure that our core Town services remain our priorities including police, fire/emergency medical services, safe drinking water, waste water treatment and trash disposal/collection.
- Safeguard and promote family values.
- Keep education and support our local schools as essential community priorities
- Promote businesses and local jobs
- Make government accountable

I will also maintain an open door to meet with citizens who wish to share concerns, ideas, and suggestions.

Strong relationships are vital for a Mayor to properly serve as an advocate for a Town. In meeting with local, county, and state leaders, I was surprised to learn that many feel that our Town relationships with them are poor or definitely could be better. To strengthen these relationships, I will do the following:

22. Meet with School District leaders on a regular basis to discuss issues, our Town/School partnership, and future planning.
23. Meet with County Supervisors on a regular basis to discuss issues, our Town/County partnership, and future planning.
24. Meet with elected State and Federal Officials on a regular basis to discuss issues and our Town/State partnership.

To involve our citizens in Town government and allow for improved means of providing feedback, I will do the following:

25. Work with our Congress of Neighborhoods to identify specific Home Owner Association (HOA) and neighborhood leaders who will serve as a point of contact for their areas to share and receive information with designated Town representatives.
26. Create a new email distribution list for Town citizens who want to receive updates on issues and provide feedback on how the Town might resolve specific issues.
27. Reach out to areas of our Town that lack representation on Town Boards/Commissions and invite them to apply for positions (*during numerous campaign neighborhood meetings in South Gilbert, I have met many who are interested in volunteer opportunities—they will be on the invite list*).

In the past, I have been an active community leader with faith group leaders in organizing Interfaith activities. While I understand the need to keep government and church separated from a policy perspective, I also understand the benefit that our faith group leaders provide to strengthen our community and provide needed services. To encourage synergy in our community, I will do the following:

28. Go to lunch once a week with different religious leaders in our Town; this will provide me an opportunity to develop new relationships and learn about Town issues from our local religious leaders.
29. Schedule an annual Town sponsored "Faith Group Leader Forum" to allow local religious leaders to meet Town leaders, learn about Town plans for the next year (including key dates of Town activities to add to their calendar), and learn about Town services that may benefit faith groups such as emergency preparedness resources.
30. Encourage faith groups to organize and participate in interfaith activities.
31. Assign an additional duty to a Town resource to coordinate local faith-based initiatives.
32. Recommend that our Town become a "Golden Rule City" as part of the Arizona Interfaith Movement's endorsement.

While we have a proud agriculture heritage and we were known in the early 1900's as the "Hay Capital of the World," our Town has established a new reputation as a "Freedom Center." In 2002, I led efforts for an Interfaith activity to be called "Constitution Week." When we applied for a permit to use a side street for a "Constitution Week Children's Parade," Town officials suggested that we invite the entire Town. This great idea turned into our Town's first "Constitution Week" celebration. With the leadership of local Gilbert citizens, our Town now hosts what many believe to be the largest Constitution celebration in the country. As Mayor, I would support the concept of our Town being recognized as a "Freedom Center for Patriotism" and I would support continued brainstorming to potentially add:

33. Activities that might draw tourists to Gilbert with a freedom theme for Film Festivals, National Quilting Exhibits, Art Displays, and Freedom Poetry.
34. Charter schools that emphasize freedom and patriotism.
35. Architectural structures with freedom themes.

### Town Staff Leadership

Our 1,100 Town employees need a leader who understands how to best apply our services to support the citizens of Gilbert. To leverage my ability to apply my business experience and solutions with Town services, I pledge to do the following:

36. Meet with each Town department within 90 days to gain a detailed understanding of our services, issues, needs and plans.
37. Introduce myself to each Town employee (and while I may not remember every name, I will make an effort to do so).
38. Attend a meeting with each Town Board/Commission to thank those serving as volunteers and better understand the types of issues and decisions that are part of their stewardship.

To supplement our Town's "Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)" program emphasizing customer satisfaction, I will do the following:

39. Implement a culture of becoming a "service organization" with performance measurements and leaders who are trained to coach their team members with clear expectations, frequent feedback, and modeling.
40. Find new and creative ways to recognize Town employees for excellent customer service and teamwork.
41. Enhance Town leadership and talent development initiatives with an emphasis on providing employee training (at least one activity every two months) on the Town values of Trust, Service Excellence, Fairness, Protection, Communication, and Innovation.
42. Ensure that we have specific training for those involved in the development and review of Request for Proposals (RFPs), construction processes, and project management.
43. Create a "Code of Ethics" for the Town Council to enhance our Town commitment to lead our community with unquestionable ethical behavior. *(Note: Town employees currently have a "Code of Ethics" in the Personnel Manual; the Town Council does not have a similar document.)*

To instill a culture of fiscal accountability and avoiding wasteful spending, I will do the following:

44. Recommend to the Town Council that spending and ceiling limits be placed on change orders (to avoid the problems of Big League Dreams).
45. Find ways to recognize Town employees who identify "cost saving" measures.
46. Research "Best Practices" nationally to find creative and innovative solutions to local problems. Avoid doing things the same old way just because it is convenient.