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**For immediate release**

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## **ADOT receives 2017 regional partnering award**

Pima Association of Governments and the Regional Transportation Authority presented the 2017 Timothy M. Ahrens Partnering Award to the Arizona Department of Transportation on May 25 during the monthly meetings of the PAG Regional Council and RTA Board.

ADOT received the award for the State Route 77 Widening and Wildlife Crossings Project, a wildlife linkages project funded as part of the RTA plan's transportation safety element. Multiple partners were involved with the project, including Pima County, the Town of Oro Valley, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Arizona State Land Department, the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, Granite Construction Inc. and AECOM.

The award was established in 2013 to recognize the spirit of collaboration and partnering as exemplified by the late Timothy M. Ahrens. Mr. Ahrens was the RTA manager during development of the \$2.1 billion, 20-year RTA plan. He managed the RTA's 35-member citizens' advisory committee and gave hundreds of presentations during the public outreach phase before the RTA plan was approved by Pima County voters on May 16, 2006.

Success of the project is demonstrated in the following areas: achieving a common goal, embracing regional stakeholders, resolving conflict, improving communication on the project with all audiences, incorporating team-building activities, delivery of a quality product, finding innovative funding solutions, and perpetuating the spirit of cooperation.

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The crossings were part of an ADOT project to widen Oracle Road/State Route 77. The crossings were completed in May 2016.

In relation to the spirit of cooperation, the project application noted that although the project is completed, partners formed an ad-hoc committee to address monitoring, signage, website development and education/outreach to the community at large.

Pima County Environmental Planning Manager Sherry Ruther stated in the application submittal that integrating effective wildlife crossing elements into a major roadway improvement project was "daunting, to say the least. There was no precedent for such an undertaking in southeast Arizona. Relationships and enduring partnerships this project forged were undeniably an essential part of why this project is a success."

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*Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, watershed, air quality and economic vitality. Please visit [www.PAGregion.com](http://www.PAGregion.com) or [www.facebook.com/PAGregion](https://www.facebook.com/PAGregion) for more information.*

*The Regional Transportation Authority is the fiscal manager of the \$2.1 billion regional transportation plan approved by Pima County voters on May 16, 2006. The RTA Board is comprised of elected representatives from the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, Pima County, the towns of Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O'odham Nation. The Pima County representative of the Arizona State Transportation Board also serves on the board. The RTA is managed through Pima Association of Governments, the region's metropolitan planning organization. For more information about the RTA plan, visit [www.RTAmobility.com](http://www.RTAmobility.com), see [www.facebook.com/RTAPimaCounty](https://www.facebook.com/RTAPimaCounty) or call (520) 792-1093.*