

## Second theme park founder attracts crowd at Robson as EDGE speaker

By LINDSEY GEMME, Editor

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**Approx. 100 people attended this month's EDGE meeting, at the Robson Ranch Grill last Friday to put newly discovered theme park planner Rev. Dic Minnick on the hot seat about his plans for his project in Eloy called The Arizona Territories.**



Staff photos by Lindsey Gemme, Decades  
Principal Greg Sherman gives a brief  
update on the rock and roll theme park's  
progression.

The audience ranged from a composition of Robson and Eloy residents, investors, developers, realtors, and city staff, etc.

Minnick's very eager audience asked about the timeframe for the park's build-out, the amount of jobs, his use of contractors (local or otherwise), commercial development, and how the park will try to offset the heat during the summer months.

Between the theme park and the six-building, 600,000 square-foot film studio to be built on Sunshine Boulevard right off of the highway, he anticipates employing 4,000 people.

Funding for both projects is already set and ready to go through royalties and profits from prior film projects. But, Minnick admitted, the film studio, to be called MFT Studios, is his prime concern; the park is only to be a "second income" for him.

"That's another reason why Decades and I will not be competitors," Minnick told the crowd. "It'll go hand-in-hand and be friends all the way through this."

The studio could be completed and operational within 15 months after its anticipated start in September. The studio alone would be employing around 700 its first year, and probably shrink down to about 25 by the time the theme park opens as many of its employees leave for frequent on-location filming. The type of film projects Minnick says that MFT studios will crank out will be "anything Hollywood can do."

The studio is to be located across the street from the theme park on the west side of Sunshine Boulevard and the northeast corner of Phillips.

The "master-planned" theme park, he explained would have 12 entrances/exits, and possibly a reconstructed I-10 highway exit onto Sunshine for access to the park after ADOT turns the highway into a six-lane corridor.

But work on the park won't begin for some time, as rides take anywhere from 18 to 36 months to construct, he explained. The wooden roller coaster planned for the park, already nine months into construction, will take two to three years to build. After that's finished, the park should be open for business.

When asked whether local contractors would be used for the park construction, Minnick said that he would be bringing in his own crews.

"My father was in the construction business. We have a lot of friends in the construction business. So, we have a

general contractor coming up out of California. I prefer someone with the theme park knowledge, simply because there's a lot more to it than building a city mall, but to make everything run as smooth as possible with permits from state, city, county, federal, international..."

To answer the concern about the hot temperatures in the summertime, most rides and areas will be equipped with misting systems to offset the heat.

The park will have limited retail at first, he said, and many of its amenities will be run by one or more of MFT Entertainment's seven sub-companies. For example, the park's first hotel and restaurants will be managed by his own hospitality company, with a possibility of subleasing some of the surrounding property for other hotel chains.

"Because I'm sure one hotel is not going to be enough for Decades and I both," he noted.

Another concern brought up was whether the area housing stock was going to meet the job opportunities. Jeff Clark with SkyCast explained that his company was facing the problem of finding qualified manufacturing employees locally, and has had to lean on commuters from Tucson or Phoenix. At this time, there is little opportunity for prospective employees to purchase homes in the area.

Minnick mentioned that there were at least eight major master planned communities slated for this area, amassing 15,000 to 30,000 homes each, ranging from \$200,000 to \$800,000.

"I think homebuilders are still waiting for one to pull the gun before the next one starts to build," he mentioned, and implied that those builders are basically waiting for the thumbs up from he and Decades before they begin construction.

Though not currently working yet, the project soon will have a Web presence at [www.mftworldentertainment.com](http://www.mftworldentertainment.com).

Mr. Minnick did not have an answer as to a timeframe when he and Eloy city officials will begin negotiations.

Decades, on the other hand, will be sitting down with the city in the next few weeks to begin discussions on land planning, principals Greg Sherman and Marty West told the crowd.

"We're very excited to be on the next phase of our adventure, and we hope to have some very good news to share with everybody soon," Sherman said.