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My View: No surprise Maricopa County is growing again

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Steve Chucri

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Steve Chucri

I was very excited when I read the headline that Maricopa County is the fastest-growing county in the nation. It's not because more is always better; it's because people from across the country are learning what I've known since I was a little boy wandering around my family's car dealership in Mesa.

Maricopa County is a uniquely special place to raise a family, run a business and live a quality life.

Let's be honest: some of it is just good fortune. We're one of the few major metro areas where the sun is out almost every day, where there is space to expand, and where the culture emphasizes hard work and individual responsibility. If those were the only selling points, Maricopa County would still be worthy of attracting the 81,000-plus new residents we saw last year.

But that's not all we have to offer. As a Maricopa County supervisor, I can tell you we have enacted policies that not only promote additional growth, but ensure it is sustainable.

Arizona's economy was defined for decades by the five C's, but what is happening now is much different. We are diversifying our economy in important ways, from the efforts of our higher education institutions to ensure people from all walks of life have access to the type of education and training that prepares them to work in critical industries, to a real estate market that values both new builds and renovation of existing infrastructure.

The future of the tech industry is emerging right here. For example, Scottsdale's "zero mass water" uses solar panels to produce clean tap water without the need to connect to infrastructure below ground; in essence, creating water from air.

The Board of Supervisors has worked to get government out of the way of this growth, simplifying regulatory paperwork to let businesses, big and small, grow and flourish. Regional pro-growth policies helped our economy add more than 7,770 jobs* in FY 2016 and help explain why some of our biggest employers are doubling down on their investments in our fine county.

We continue to find ways to improve public safety, not only funding the necessary manpower to protect our streets but also applying evidence-based practices so we are more efficient.

The county inspects restaurants and swimming pools, monitors air quality, and works with the state to promote major public health initiatives and mitigate health threats. These are sophisticated systems that you don't see but which make our community safer and more appealing.

We're working on a transportation plan that creates new avenues for pedestrians, cyclists and cars through the year 2035.

And our No. 1 priority continues to be managing your tax dollars wisely.

More isn't always better, but when I read the latest census numbers I don't just see a growing population; I see growing opportunity.

Steve Chucris is Maricopa County Supervisor for District 2. He can be reached on Twitter at @Steve_Chucris or chucris@mail.maricopa.gov.

* Jobs numbers come from the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) which identified 43 businesses that located to or expanded in the region resulting in the addition of a projected 7,700 new jobs.