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Pioneer Title Agency marks 10 years in Thatcher

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Pioneer Title

Members of the Pioneer Title team pause for a moment as they prepare to celebrate the business' anniversary Friday. Pictured, from left, are Aruanah Mendez, Martha Gherna, Brooks Udall, Rick Skinner, Patsy Luzania and Sherri Rapier.

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Contributed article By Alison Bailin Batz | 0 comments

THATCHER — On Friday, March 14, Pioneer Title Agency will celebrate its 10th anniversary in Thatcher.

But while the business itself joined the family-owned Pioneer Title Agency in 2004, the office's rich history actually predates Arizona itself.

In the early 1900s, Carrie and Charles Yett began working in the real estate industry in what were then called "property abstracts," which were collections of legal documents that chronicled activities associated with one or more parcels of land including deeds, mortgages, wills, probate records and more in the area.

Eventually seeing the benefit in combining efforts with fellow abstractors in the area, the Yetts officially founded Consolidated Abstract in 1917.

"We still marvel at the amazing handwriting by that first team," said Pioneer Title Agency Thatcher Branch Manager Rick Skinner, noting staff members still use the century-old handwritten records today for research.

"Carrie was so good, she actually transcribed all of the records for Greenlee County when it became separate from Graham County," he said.

In 1919, the Yetts offered their daughter, Daisy Householder, and son-in-law, retired army Colonel Earnest D. Householder, to purchase the business. The Householder family would continue to run Consolidated Abstract — eventually changing the name to Consolidated Title — until the mid-1970s, when their son, Vernon, sold the business to Dudley and Marilyn Welker.

Over the next four decades, the business flourished. When the Welkers decided to retire in 2004, Pioneer Title Agency President Keith Newlon jumped at the chance to purchase its assets — including the businesses, staff and the antique handwritten records of Arizona dating back to the 1800s and several keepsakes from the colonel himself.

While the business officially transferred to Pioneer Title Agency in 2004, the entire staff chose to remain with the company — many still with the office today.

"Like Consolidated Title, Pioneer Title Agency is a family-owned business with strong local ties," Skinner said. "The Newlon family, Bob and his wife, Betty, son Keith and his wife, Cindy, initially founded Pioneer Title in Sierra Vista in 1985 with the goal of providing exceptional service to Arizona's smaller municipalities and towns."

While the company was founded in 1985, the Newlons' foothold into the title business began much earlier. Bob, a life member of the Land Title Association of Arizona, has called Arizona home since 1935 and has worked in the industry since 1958. Keith, a 2010 inductee into the NAU College of Business Hall of Fame, got his start in the title industry in 1979.

"Our success is directly linked to our people — some of whom have been with us since day one," Bob Newlon said. "Beyond our real estate prowess, which is sizeable, our people and 'local first' company culture are what we are most proud of."

Today, as Thatcher celebrates 10 years as a part of the Pioneer family, the business itself has grown to the largest title agency in Arizona — and one of the most community-minded businesses in the state.

"Under our 'Pioneer Title Agency in Action' community relations umbrella, we help our local offices sponsor local sports teams, organize fund-raising walks and donate to causes near and dear to their hearts," Keith Newlon said. "Pioneer's management and staff are empowered to take an active role in the communities where they live and work."

Taking this to heart, the Thatcher office has actively supported the Graham County Chamber of Commerce, Mount Graham Little League, Thatcher High School Booster Club, Eastern Arizona Booster Club and Safford High School Booster Club in recent months through donations, fund-raisers and volunteer time, just to name a few.

"We thought our 10-year anniversary should similarly be linked to our commitment to this community, and as a way to honor our history," Skinner said. "In fact, we are using our anniversary celebration as a donation drive for the local St. Vincent de Paul Society as well as an open house to show off some of our antique tools and mementos from the colonel himself."

Those who attend the March 14 celebration are encouraged to bring one or more non-perishable food items to donate to the cause. Those who donate will be entered into several prize drawings as well as enjoy a light lunch, compliments of Pioneer. In addition, Impact Photographer Group will provide complimentary head shots to guests.

For more information about Pioneer Title Agency, 500 S. 20th Ave. in Thatcher, call 928-428-0180.

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