

The Birthplace of Arizona's History Press Release

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Santa Cruz County Seeking Community Members to Join Southern Arizona Culinary Tourism Steering Committee

Santa Cruz County, Arizona invites community members to join a Southern Arizona Culinary Tourism Steering Committee it is forming to shape the county's cuisine tourism initiative. Please use the QR code to sign up or link at <https://forms.gle/P7WcfCwQtQG3bBNe7>



The US Economic Development Administration awarded Santa Cruz County \$300,000 in grant funding to connect employment in the fast-growing winery sector, countywide, with local restaurants, local food entrepreneurs and local businesses, directing future business growth to areas where they are wanted and needed.

This initiative responds to job losses in the services and tourism sector, as identified in the 2020 [Santa Cruz County, Arizona COVID-19 Economic Recovery Survey and Strategy](#). It also supports nature-based employment opportunities outlined in a 2021 University of Arizona study, [The Nature-Based Restorative Economy in Santa Cruz County](#), commissioned and funded by local leaders.

This initiative will produce a community led and data driven action plan that responsibly supports local economic opportunities throughout the county in a contextually sensitive manner. At the same time, it is intended to provide land use tools to help manage growth-related impacts and community concerns in Elgin and Sonoita.

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Based on community feedback throughout the public engagement process since October 2023 to date, the county recognizes the need to improve communication and engagement with the eastern part of the county.

The county is now creating a steering committee that will meet in the Elgin/Sonoita area, whose goals are to identify:

- 1) Priorities, ideas and solutions to protect the Elgin and Sonoita area
- 2) Types of potential development and areas where they can be supported to promote community compatibility and mitigate existing and future conflicts
- 3) Ways of supporting local businesses in Elgin and Sonoita that respect the local communities they serve, and how these might connect with nature-based restorative economy opportunities countywide
- 4) Improved communication on this initiative

To enhance public understanding and provide opportunities for public input, the county has also produced a fact sheet that has been updated with project highlights and next steps. More about the initiative is available on the county website at the government/plans and reports tab (<https://santacruzcountyaz.gov/833/Plans-and-Reports>). The culmination of these efforts will result in a plan to be considered by the Board of Supervisors.

For information about the Cuisine Tourism Initiative, contact Frank Dillon (fdillon@santacruzcountyaz.gov) or Angie Donelson (angie@scr-analytics.com).

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