

# Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

## Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: March 29, 2008

### *TENT CITY'S VACANCY LIGHT EXTINGUISHED*

### *FIRST TIME IN 13 YEARS AS ARPAIO CONTRIBUTES TO "EARTH DAY"*

**(Phoenix, Arizona)** It may be the most well known neon sign in the valley but tonight, for the first time in 13 years, Sheriff Arpaio's controversial, tongue-in-cheek, 6 feet by 12 feet pink neon vacancy will go dark.

At 8:00PM on Saturday, March 29, 2008, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio will order the electric sign be switched off, not because there is no more room at Tent City where today approximately 2000 convicted inmates are being housed, but because the Sheriff wants to do his part to support "Earth Day."

Earth Day is a national effort by four American cities to raise awareness about global climate change.

"I would turn off all the light in the jails if I could but it would pose a security problem," Arpaio says. "So I have decided to turn off the vacancy sign and serve over 9400 inmates only two cold meals today, thereby saving electricity."

Earth Day is an effort by four American cities and surrounding counties to help people become more aware of the problems with global warming. Businesses and residents in four major American cities have been asked to turn off all electrical appliances, lights and computers for one hour between 8 and 9 PM on Saturday, March 29, 2008.

The Sheriff has asked all employees to participate wherever and however they can.

The vacancy sign was first erected and illuminated in December 1995 by Sheriff Arpaio as a creative way to inform all valley law enforcement agencies that he will always provide room in the jails for their arrestees. Arpaio has long said he will never use overcrowding as an excuse to release inmates early or not to accept anyone charged with a crime.

<end>

News Release

100 West Washington, Suite 1900, Phoenix, Arizona 85003

Phone: (602) 876-1801 Fax: (602) 258-2081

Media Contact: [SheriffsMediaRequests@MCSO.Maricopa.Gov](mailto:SheriffsMediaRequests@MCSO.Maricopa.Gov)