

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: August 2, 2009

IT'S SWEET SIXTEEN FOR ARPAIO'S TENT CITY!

(Phoenix, AZ) The temperatures won't be the only thing sizzling at high noon on Monday, August 3rd.

About 1,000 hot dogs will be baking on barbeques throughout Tent City as Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio invites all inmates on the yard to celebrate the 16th anniversary of Tent City. **Media is invited to the anniversary gathering at noon on August 3, 2009.**

With temperatures well over the 110 degree mark expected during the noon time Monday celebration, the Sheriff has agreed to top off the day with an ice cream social as well just to cool things down. All food products were donated and therefore free to taxpayers.

"First I feed them free liver and onions on my birthday and now hot dogs and ice cream," Arpaio says. "This might tarnish my tough Sheriff image."

Tent City was opened by Sheriff Arpaio on August 3, 1993 at a cost of about \$100,000. Donated canvas tents from the Korean War era were appropriated to the Office by the U.S. Department of Defense and inmates supplied much of the labor to build Tent City, keeping construction costs as low as possible.

Today, Tent City remains the nation's largest canvas incarceration compound capable of incarcerating up to 2,500 inmates in 65 tents on about 15 acres. Only convicted men and women are housed there.

News Release

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A separate Tent City housing area was opened in April of this year by Sheriff Arpaio to house convicted inmates with immigration or other holds placed on them.

Since 1993, approximately 375,000 convicted inmates have served their sentences in Tent City. Despite the huge swings in desert temperatures, ranging from as high as 145 degrees inside a tent during the hottest summer months to as low as 15 degrees in winter, there haven't been any serious weather related incidents.

In fact, though early critics of Tent City predicted disaster for the Sheriff, Tent City has been and remains, a nation-wide model for inexpensive and safe inmate housing alternatives encouraging four presidential candidates to visit the tents over the years.

“As long as I'm the Sheriff, the tent program will be operational.” END

Media should meet a Media Relations Officer at the west gate of Tent City behind the Estrella Jail, 2939 West Durango Street at 12 noon August 3 for entry into the secured facility.

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