

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Diane Brossart
Valley Forward Association
(602) 240-2408

**VALLEY FORWARD TO HOST PANEL ON
STATE TRUST LAND REFORM**

PHOENIX (January 13, 2010) – An interactive panel of community leaders and stakeholders will discuss the challenges of Arizona state trust land reform at Valley Forward’s Board of Directors/ General Membership Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Thursday, January 28 at the Desert Botanical Garden, Dorrance Hall, 1201 North Galvin Parkway in Phoenix.

Panelists will include: Arizona State Land Commissioner Maria Baier; Dave Richins, director of the Sun Corridor Legacy Program for the Sonoran Institute; John Graham, president, Sunbelt Holdings; and Spencer Kamps, vice president of legislative affairs for the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona. David Richert, acting city manager for Scottsdale, will moderate.

The discussion will address the issues and complexities of reforming state trust land management and will explore the balance between preservation of our most environmentally significant parcels while allowing the majority to remain available for sale, benefiting education and other beneficiaries.

The luncheon is open to the public at \$60 per person; reservations can be made by calling (602) 240-2408 or registering online at www.valleyforward.org.

“We have historically advocated for the preservation of our Valley’s unique desert environment and are excited to be part of this important dialogue,” notes Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward. “For years, Arizona leaders have been discussing how to reform state trust land management and have not reached consensus. We’ve failed at the legislature and at the ballot box but are not giving up on this important issue.”

There are more than 9 million acres of trust land given to Arizona by the federal government. Although these lands are considered some of the most valuable real estate holdings in the Intermountain West, income from state land leases and sales has been minuscule. The Arizona State Land Department is constrained, struggling to meet 21st century planning and development challenges under a Constitution drafted in the 19th century. Existing laws have forced local communities and conservation groups to compete with deep-pocket developers for the state’s most desirable remaining desert landscapes. Reform will not only protect acres of trust land, but will also allow communities to balance growth and conservation.

Valley Forward is a 41-year-old, non-profit public interest organization that brings business and civic leaders together to convene thoughtful public dialogue on regional issues and to promote cooperative efforts to improve the sustainability and livability of Valley.