

The BUGLE

Sunday, January 1, 2012

Camp Verde declared 'Center of Arizona' Designation to be part of Arizona's 2012 Centennial events

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Staff Reporter

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CAMP VERDE - Designating the center of any political boundary is a project for someone with too much time on their hands, at best, and an exercise in futility at its most extreme.

Nevertheless, given the right set of circumstances it can be a lot of fun. Which is exactly what the announcement made this week, designating Camp Verde as the official Arizona 2012 Centennial Center of Arizona City, is all about.

Two years ago, in researching a series of articles on the arcane subject of geographical centers, The Bugle was put in touch with Brian Fisher a professional land surveyor, who was at the time in business for himself and, therefore, had spare time on his hands.

Fisher had made inquiries into the notion of finding Arizona's geographical center a few years earlier but had put them aside. Energized by the fact that someone else was as interested as he was in as needless of a subject, Fisher proposed making an official designation as part of the Arizona's 2012 Centennial.

Realizing the geographical center, assuming such a place actually exists, was somewhere southeast of the confluence of the [Verde River](#) and East Verde River, within the boundaries of the Mazatzal Wilderness Area, Fisher decided it would be appropriate to designate the nearest incorporated community.

The Arizona Professional Land Surveyors passed a resolution calling for the designation, and Fisher ran some calculations based on the distance between the center, based on Mercator projections and the mathematics of centroids, and the nearest town hall.

Payson, it turned out, was the closest. However, The Bugle, by now fully vested in Fisher's noble quest, filed a protest, noting that the APLS resolution made no mention of the permanence of the town hall building in question.

On more than one occasion, we argued, the Camp Verde Town Council had convened at the Verde Lakes Club House. Or at least that's our story, and we are sticking to it.

Fisher acquiesced. Last month he came to Camp Verde, made some calculations and announced that Camp Verde, based on The Bugle's protest, Mercator projections and the mathematics of centroids, was in fact the community closest to the geographic center of Arizona.



Through a little bit of subterfuge and higher forms of mathematics than most people understand, Camp Verde has been declared the official Center of Arizona city, by the Arizona Professional land Surveyors, as part of an Arizona 2012 Centennial Legacy Project.

The matter has been kept under wraps for the last few weeks for fear that Payson would lodge a protest. However, Fisher said this week that's it's a done deal.

"I tried to engage Payson in the sport but they didn't seem interested. For all the work we are going to put into this I wanted a community that wanted to be the center of attention. Camp Verde has stepped up in a big way, and I'm proud to give them the nod," Fisher said.

An application is currently in the works with the state's Centennial Committee to designate the designation as an official Arizona 2012 Centennial Legacy Project.

Fisher has also requested a proclamation from the governor calling for a "Center of Arizona Day" at which dignitaries from throughout Arizona will be invited to come to Camp Verde, sometime around April 1 to celebrate town's distinction.

The event will include the dedication of a monument somewhere in town. Fisher has designed a monument that will include a four- or five-foot steel cutout of the state that will give the illusion it is balanced on the imaginary center.

Sponsors of the monument, Central Arizona Project and [Salt River Project](#), have requested that Camp Verde place the monument in such a way that it lends attention to the Verde River, down which some 20 miles from town is the actual center.

As Camp Verde can't do anything without some controversy, the council will decide at its Jan. 3 meeting whether to acquiesce to the sponsor's wishes and place the monument at Rezzonico Park, or go with Mayor Bob Burnside's idea of placing it next to Fort Verde, so it can call attention Camp Verde's downtown.

Either way, Fisher assures The Bugle that the monument, although made of heavy gauge steel, will be portable, as long as someone has a crane.

A website, <http://sites.google.com/site/azgeocenter2012/>, has been set up for the project.

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