



International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA)

ISDA is a non-profit corporation founded in 1993 and governed by a board of directors representing the indigenous and non-indigenous populations of the U.S. and Mexico.

ISDA's mission:

- promote the concept and practice of conservation throughout the bio region;
- provide education in ways of protecting and respecting valuable biological and cultural resources and traditions;
- develop creative and sustainable solutions to critical local issues such as housing and economic development;
- and provide practical opportunities for individual and community action.

Successes to Date

ISDA is making good progress at getting the space ready for our new Business Tech Center in the Ajo Plaza. Meanwhile, ISDA has been providing assistance to more than 10 businesses by using the services of the Microbusiness Advancement Center in Tucson (bringing their consultants to Ajo to work with our businesses on profitability strategies mainly as well as some basic business development skills).

Challenges

The rural economy has still not recovered from the recession to the degree seen in Tucson or Phoenix, the two nearest urban areas (140 and 100 miles from Ajo, respectively) and the militarization of the border continues to cut into the flow of tourists through our town en route to Mexico and the flow of customers from Mexico north. So our local economy has taken two hits. Businesses continue to struggle – the informal word is that business revenue is at about 1/2 to 1/3 what it was prior to the recession.

What Lies Ahead

ISDA will continue to make progress in reviving the business economy. They have recently obtained funding for an equity investment fund for Ajo Plaza businesses and for a revolving loan fund and will look for additional funding for these strategies. ISDA will open a business tech center in 2016!