

Sinclair leads Sunshine Service into 63rd year

Leader teed off with group in 1999



(Scott Tynes/Independent Newsmedia)

Jim Sinclair talks to guests of the Sun City Expo about Sunshine Service Sept. 23 at Sundial Recreation Center.

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By Scott Tynes | Independent Newsmedia

Either on the links or lending medical equipment, Jim Sinclair is a well-known figure around Sun City.

The 86-year-old Illinois native has lived in Sun City for 29 years and when not found in the offices of Sun City Sunshine Service assisting his fellow residents with medical equipment, he can be found three or four days a week making the rounds of one of the Recreation Centers of Sun City's eight golf courses.

He prefers to play in the middle of the day when most people are avoiding the scorching Arizona heat.

“When I get on the course, it’s usually just me and the rattlesnakes and the roadrunners,” he said.

Sinclair used to golf every day after he moved here in 1995, but years later he woke up one morning with a grimace realizing he was golfing again that day. He decided then to cut back to three or four days a week.

However, he has never cut back from his time spent supporting Sunshine Service.

Sunshine Service has supplied Sun City residents’ needs for durable medical equipment and other household items since it started in 1961 as the Sick and Visiting Committee as part of the Sun City Civic Association, which evolved into the Sun City Home Owners Association in 1964. It was renamed the Sunshine Committee April 1, 1962, and loaned its first piece of medical equipment the next day. It became an independent chartered organization in October 1964, and the name changed to Sunshine Service, Sinclair said.

“As things evolved and began to grow ... Del Webb donated some land and built the first building (at 10307 Oakmont Drive) at cost,” he said. “We outgrew that, too, and he built another 50 foot to the building in 1968.”

A few years later, the growth of the organization prompted Webb to donate more land at the current site at 9980 W. Sante Fe Drive in 1973. He later built the existing buildings in 1973, 1978 and 1983 and joined them together into a 22,000 sq. ft. structure with 10,000 sq. ft. of additional shelving, Sinclair said.

“It has grown pretty well,” he said. “People took care of us then and continue to do so.”

Sunshine officials helped establish similar organizations in Sun City West, Youngtown and Peoria, but remains the largest.

Sinclair said he became involved with the 501(c) charity a few years after he moved here. He was elected to the 10-member board in 1999, but resigned in 2001 to become the administrator, which was changed to executive officer about 15 years ago.

The mission and the need have not changed in more than two decades, he said, but medical advancements and lifestyle changes have had an effect.

“We don’t see as many people as we did then,” Sinclair said.

When he first became involved, the charity used to see about 20,000 a year, he said. That number has dropped to between 14,000 and 16,000 per year now.

“That’s because people are living longer, but also living healthier,” he said.

Healthy living and an upbringing in the heat the Southwest is what allows to play 18 holes in the middle of the day, he said. He moved from Illinois as an eight-year-old boy and lived in Tulsa for 49

years. The second generation Sun Citian has been visiting here since 1974.

“I don’t ever want to leave,” he said.

Sunshine Service offices are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday or call 623-974-6514.