

Draft Environmental Assessment

Town of Florence Communications Tower

Town of Florence, Arizona Homeland Security Grant Program September, 2011



U.S. Department of Homeland Security 500 C Street, SW Washington, DC 20472

Document Prepared By:

Bill Norman – Grants Writer Town of Florence P.O. Box 2670 Florence, Arizona 85132

Document Prepared For:

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Town of Florence P.O. Box 2670 Florence, Arizona 85132

Environmental Assessment For Town of Florence Communications Tower Anthem@Merrill Ranch Community Facilities Parcel Florence, Arizona

Town of Florence, Arizona

Environmental Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

The Town of Florence, Arizona has a need to improve its public safety communications system in order to provide complete radio coverage to all areas of the town, particularly including the Anthem@Merrill Ranch development in the northern portion of the town. To assist the town in this effort, the Arizona Department of Homeland Security (AZDOHS), through FEMA, has provided grant funding to assist with the purchase and installation of a communications tower, a storage building, an emergency generator and related equipment. A review by FEMA of the Town's initial environmental submission has determined the need for an Environmental Assessment.

The proposed tower site is located within the Anthem@Merrill Ranch development on the parcel set aside through a development agreement with the Town of Florence described as the Community Facilities parcel. This parcel is intended for the future location of a fire station and a public library, and perhaps other government facilities. Access to the parcel is from the Hunt Highway, which borders the parcel on the west side. The parcel, as well as all of the surrounding area, is typical Sonoran Desert terrain. Residential development has already occurred on the north side of the parcel and future development is planned for the east and south sides. There is currently no development on the Community Parcel. (See Appendices #1, #2 and #3)

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations to implement NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA's regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR Part 10). FEMA is required to consider potential environmental impacts before funding or approving actions and projects. The purpose of this EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the installation of a communications tower on the parcel dedicated for Community Facilities within the Anthem@Merrill Ranch development. FEMA will use the findings in this EA to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

2.0 Purpose and Need

The purpose and objective of the Homeland Security Grant Program is to build and sustain national preparedness capabilities.

The need to be addressed by the use of FEMA funding, through AZDOHS, is that of providing timely and efficient emergency service to the citizens of and visitors to the Town of Florence by improving the ability of first responders to communicate effectively during an emergency event. By addressing this need, the Town of Florence will contribute to the objective of building and sustaining national preparedness capabilities.

3.0 Alternatives

3.1 No Action Alternative

If no action is taken, then first responders will not be able to communicate effectively, and sometimes not at all, during responses to emergencies in some portions of the Town of Florence.

3.2 Proposed Action

Installing a 179ft. communications tower within the Anthem@Merrill Ranch development will enable the Town to provide complete radio coverage for emergency responders in all its areas of service and responsibility. This location has been determined by communications engineers to be acceptable for providing the needed radio coverage, and the property has been set aside as a Community Facilities parcel as part of the development agreement between Anthem@Merrill Ranch and the Town of Florence.

4.0 Affected Environment and Potential Impacts

4.1 Wetlands

Executive Order 11990 entitled "Protection of Wetlands" dated May 24, 1977, requires Federal agencies to take action to avoid adversely impacting wetlands wherever possible.

The proposed site of the communications tower, and in fact the entire Community Facilities parcel is not located in a wetlands and has no wetland issues associated with it. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory Map prepared for the Anthem@Merrill Ranch Community Parcel on March 21, 2011 does not identify any wetlands issues. (See Appendix #4 – Wetlands Map)

4.2 Floodplains

Executive Order 11988 entitled "Floodplain Management" dated May 24, 1977, requires Federal agencies to evaluate the potential effects of actions it may take in a floodplain to avoid adversely impacting floodplains wherever possible.

The proposed site of the communications tower is located above and away from the 100-year floodplain, which follows a normally dry wash on the eastern boundary of the Community Facilities parcel. The Flood Zone for this parcel is shown in the Flood Insurance Rate Map for Pinal County, Panel 875 of 2575, Map Number 04021C0875E. (See Appendix #5 – Floodplain Map)

4.3 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) require the consideration of the existence of endangered species and/or critical habitat on the proposed site prior to the Town's installation of a communications tower.

In a reply to the Town's request for comment on the proposed tower installation, Steven L. Spangle, Field Supervisor for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service states: "We have reviewed the project information provided with your letter, including the map of the project location. Based on the information provided, we believe no endangered or threatened species, or critical habitat will be affected by the project; nor is the project likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species or destroy or adversely modify proposed critical habitat, because no such species or habitats exist in the project area." (See Appendix #6 – U.S. Fish & Wildlife)

In a reply to the Town's request for comment on the proposed tower installation in relationship to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, Dave Krueper, Assistant Non-Game Bird Coordinator for Region 2 (Southwest) of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, stated that his specific concerns were: 1) if the tower was going to be lighted; 2) if the tower would have guy wires attached; and 3) if the tower was solid or lattice type construction. In response, the Town verified that the tower would not be lighted, would not have guy wires attached, and was a lattice type structure. Mr. Krueper stated that because there were no guy wires, the lattice type tower is actually good because it provides a potential resting or roosting place for birds without the danger of the adjoining wires. Mr. Krueper further stated that the Migratory Bird Division has no concerns about the tower and suggests that we proceed.

4.4 Cultural Resources

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) require the consideration of cultural resources prior to the Town's installation of a communications tower.

There is no evidence of any historical or American Indian activity on or near the proposed tower site. Archaeological Consulting Services of Tempe, Arizona (ACS) conducted a Class I Cultural Resource Review of the site and surrounding area for submission with the Town's FCC Form 620 New Tower Submission and made the following recommendations: ACS recommends a finding of no historic properties affected within the direct APE; ACS also recommends a finding of no historic properties affected in the visual APE. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurs. (See Appendix #7 – Cultural Resource Summary and Appendix #8 – SHPO)

4.5 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," provides that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."

The installation of a communications tower on the Community Facilities parcel will have no adverse health or environmental effects on any human population including minorities, low-income populations and Native Americans. There are no humans currently living on or otherwise occupying the Community Services parcel and the communications tower will not produce any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on the residents living in the surrounding area.

Conversely, the installation of a communications tower will enable first-responders to provide more effective and timely emergency service to all people equally, including minorities, low-income populations and Native Americans.

Public participation relating to Environmental Justice is addressed below under the heading of Public Involvement.

5.0 Agency Coordination

Agencies contacted and asked to review the project:

Gila River Indian Community
P.O. Box 97
Tohono O'odham Nation
P.O. Box 837

Sacaton, AZ 85247 Sells, AZ 85634

Arizona State Parks
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
State Historic Preservation Office
2321 W. Royal Palm Road #103
1300 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951

6.0 Public Involvement

Phoenix, AZ 85007

Discussion of the needed improvements to the Town's public safety communications system and the need for the installation of a new communications tower occurred at an open meeting of the Florence Town Council on November 9, 2009.

The problems with the Town's emergency communications system was reported in a news article in the Florence Reminder and Blade-Tribune on November 19, 2009.

On May 1, 2011, the Design Review Committee of the Anthem Parkside at Merrill Ranch Homeowner's Association approved the Town's proposal to construct a communications tower and ancillary equipment on the town-owned Community Facilities parcel.

A press release from the Town on June 17, 2011 titled "Town to Upgrade Public Safety Communication System" was sent to local and regional media (print, television, radio, etc.), posted on the Town's website (under "Florence News"), and sent to the Town's "Florence News" email distribution list (about 450 subscribers).

The Town has not received any comment expressing concern about or opposition to the proposed installation of the communications tower and the resulting improvement to its public safety communications system.

7.0 Permits

The Town has completed an FCC Form 620 – Section 106 Filing for the proposed tower site, File Number: 0004779502. No adverse comments or recommendations were received. (See Appendix #9 – FCC Form 620)

The selected contractor will be required to obtain appropriate building permits from the Town of Florence.

No other permits are believed to be required for this project; however the Town will certainly comply with any applicable permit requirements that may surface in the future.

8.0 Preparation

This document was prepared by: Bill Norman – Grants Writer

Town of Florence P.O. Box 2670 Florence, AZ 85132 Phone: 520-868-7513

bill.norman@florenceaz.gov

9.0 Appendices

#1 - Community Parcel

#2 - Site Location Aerial Photo

#3 - Tower Site Looking Northwest

#4 - Wetlands Map

#5 - Floodplain Map

#6 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife

#7 - Cultural Resource Review

#8 - SHPO

#9 - FCC Form 620

Appendix #1

AZDOHS Agreement No. 777303-01 Town of Florence Public Safety Communications Improvements



Appendix #2

AZDOHS Agreement No. 777303-01 Town of Florence Public Safety Communications Improvements



Site location on 2009 aerial photograph

Yellow line is the approximate boundary of the Community Parcel set aside through a development agreement during the approval and permitting process for *Anthem @ Merrill Ranch* in Florence.

Appendix #3

Town of Florence Public Safety Communications Improvements Anthem at Merrill Ranch Community Parcel



Site of Communications Tower, related structure, equipment and fence.

Photo Taken at Southeast Corner of Tower Site, Looking Northwest.

Orange Cone is at Center of Tower Site – Pink Flag in Foreground is Southeast Corner Canon EOS Digital Rebel XTi Camera with Canon EFS 18-55mm Zoom Lens Lens set at 55mm for Photograph – Photo Taken 5 feet Off Ground



Wetlands Map

Mar 21, 2011

Wetlands

Estuarine and Marine Deepwater Freshwater Forested/Shrub Freshwater Emergent

Riverine Other

Estuarine and Marine Freshwater Pond

This map is for general reference only. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for the accuracy or currentness of the base data shown on this map. All wetlands related data should be used in accordance with the layer metadata found on the Wetlands Mapper web site.

500 ft

100 m

User Remarks:

HSGP 2010-SS-T0-00867Anthem@Merrill RanchCommunity Parcel





United States Department of the Interior

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Arizona Ecological Services Office

2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103 Phoenix, Arizona 85021-4951

Telephone: (602) 242-0210 Fax: (602) 242-2513



In reply refer to: AESO/SE 22410-2011-I-0188

April 4, 2011

Mr. Bill Norman Town of Florence P.O. Box 2670 Florence, Arizona 85232

Dear Mr. Norman:

Thank you for your correspondence of March 18, 2011, received by us on March 21, 2011, requesting our concurrence, in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.), that the construction of a communications tower located in the Anthem at Merrill Ranch Development, Town of Anthem, Pinal County, Arizona, will not affect federally-listed threatened or endangered species. This tower site will require a license from the Federal Communications Commission. For future reference, please note that "no effect" determinations do not require written concurrence or agreement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

We have reviewed the project information provided with your letter, including the map of the project location. Based on the information provided, we believe no endangered or threatened species, or critical habitat will be affected by the project; nor is the project likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species or destroy or adversely modify proposed critical habitat, because no such species or habitats exist in the project area. No further review is required for this project at this time. Should the project site change or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may need to be reconsidered.

We encourage you to coordinate review of this project with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Should you require further assistance or have any questions, please contact Marc Wicke (x217) or Debra Bills (x239).

Delpu T. Bell

Sincerely,

Steven L. Spangle Field Supervisor

cc: Chief, Habitat Branch, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, AZ

W:\Marc Wicke\Section 7 non energy\Florence_CommTwr.docx:jkey

A CLASS I CULTURAL RESOURCE LITERATURE REVIEW FOR A TOWN OF FLORENCE COMMUNICATION TOWER AT ANTHEM AT MERRILL RANCH, FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA

Prepared by Glennda Gene Luhnow, M.A., RPA

> Submitted by Kristin L. Fangmeier, M.A.

> > Prepared for Town of Florence

Archaeological Consulting Services, Ltd. Project No. 11-088:LRVW May 12, 2011

SHPO Standardized Report Abstract

REPORT TITLE:

A Class I Cultural Resource Literature Review for a Town of Florence Communication Tower at Anthem at Merrill Ranch, Florence, Pinal County,

Arizona

DATE OF REPORT:

May 12, 2010

AGENCY PROJECT NO.:

Not Assigned

ACS PROJECT NO.:

11-088:LRVW

AGENCIES/TRIBES:

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

LAND OWNERSHIP:

Private

PROJECT FUNDING:

Town of Florence

REGULATORY CONTEXT:

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended;

2004 FCC Nationwide Programmatic Agreement (NPA)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Town of Florence plans to construct a new communication tower within Parcel 211-02-0240 in the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development in Florence, Pinal County, Arizona. The proposed communication tower will be 179 ft in height. In accordance with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Nationwide Programmatic Agreement (NPA), applicants for a FCC permit must comply with Section 106 of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act

(NHPA), as amended.

At the request of Mr. Bill Norman of the Town of Florence, Archaeological Consulting Services, Ltd. (ACS) prepared a Class I cultural resource literature review and cultural-historical overview of the project area and visual impact assessment of the 0.5-mile visual Area of Potential Effect (APE) to provide an inventory and assessment of cultural resources that might be affected by the proposed undertaking. The project area was previously surveyed for cultural resources (North et al. 2004; Slawson 1998), therefore a cultural resource survey

of the parcel for the FCC permit was not required.

LOCATION:

Township 4 South, Range 8 East, Section 25 (Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian) as plotted on the 7.5' Florence, Ariz. topographic quadrangle in

Florence, Pinal County.

SURVEYED ACRES:

Not applicable

METHODOLOGY:

Sources examined for the Class I literature review included site and project files at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the AZSITE Cultural Resources Database (AZSITE); historic General Land Office (GLO) plats on file at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arizona State Office were also reviewed.

NUMBER OF SITES:

26

Within direct APE: 0

Within visual APE: 7 [AZ U:13:254, U:15:416, U:15:469-471, U:15:497-

498(ASM)]



Within review area outside visual APE: 19 [AZ AA:3:210, U:14:332, U:15:127, U:15:250, U:15:250, U:15:335, U:15:274–375, U:15:415, U:15:429, U:15:490–491, U:15:494–496, U:15:500–510, U:15:533, U:15:548(ASM); NA12561]

ELIGIBLE SITES:

15

Within direct APE: 0

Within visual APE: 5 [AZ U:15:469-471, U:15:497-498(ASM)]

Within review area outside visual APE: 10 [AZ U:14:332, U:15:127, U:15:250, U:15:335, U:15:374–375, U:15:415, U:15:490, U:15:496, U:15:533(ASM)]

UNKNOWN ELIGIBILITY:

2

Within direct APE: 0 Within visual APE: 0

Within review area outside visual APE: 2 [AZ U:15:548(ASM), NA12561]

NOT ELIGIBLE SITES:

9

Within direct APE: 0

Within visual APE: 2 [AZ U:13:254, U:15:416(ASM)]

Within review area outside visual APE: 7 [AZ AA:3:210, U:15:429, U:9:491,

U:15:494-495, U:15:500-501(ASM)]

COMMENTS:

ACS' Class I cultural resource literature review and visual impact assessment for the new Town of Florence 179-ft-tall communication tower located at the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development identified no cultural resources within the direct APE, so ACS recommends a finding of no historic properties affected within the direct APE.

Five cultural resources that have been previously recommended eligible for the National Register occur within the visual APE; all of these are Hohokam artifact scatters. Two of these (AZ U:15:497–498[ASM]) have been mitigated as part of the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development and no longer exist. Three others (AZ U:15:469–471[ASM]) are located in undisturbed areas; however, the data that they contain will not be compromised by visual impacts. As a result, ACS also recommends a finding of no historic properties affected in the visual APE.

If previously unrecorded cultural resources are found during construction, the resources should be protected in place and the FCC should be notified to address the findings as a post-review discovery in compliance with state law (ARS §41-844) and Stipulation IX of the 2004 FCC NPA. If human remains or funerary objects are discovered, work in the vicinity of the discovery must stop immediately and the FCC, SHPO, and the Arizona State Museum should be notified in accordance with state law (ARS §41-865) and Stipulation IX of the 2004 FCC NPA

Introduction

The Town of Florence plans to construct a new communication tower within Parcel 211-02-0240 in the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development in Florence, Pinal County, Arizona. The proposed communication tower will be 179 ft in height. In accordance with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Nationwide Programmatic Agreement (NPA), applicants for a FCC permit must comply with Section 106 of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended.

At the request of Mr. Bill Norman of the Town of Florence, Archaeological Consulting Services, Ltd. (ACS) prepared a Class I cultural resource literature review and cultural-historical overview of the project area and visual impact assessment of the 0.5-mile visual Area of Potential Effect (APE) to provide an inventory and assessment of cultural resources that might be affected by the proposed undertaking. The project area was previously surveyed for cultural resources (North et al. 2004; Slawson 1998), therefore a cultural resource survey of the parcel for the FCC permit was not required. Based on the results of the previously conducted survey and current background research, ACS recommends a finding of no historic properties in the direct APE and no historic properties affected in the visual APE.

Project Area of Potential Effect

The area of potential effect (APE) for direct impacts (direct APE) consists of the area of potential disturbance and any property that would be physically altered by the undertaking. The direct APE consists of an approximately 22 × 38 ft area and 12-ft-wide access road measuring 312 ft in length totaling 0.25 acres on private land in Section 25 of Township 4 South, Range 8 East (Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian) (Figures 1–3). The APE for visual impacts (visual APE), which is the area within which impacts to the setting of historic properties are assessed, consists of a 0.5-mi-radius around the direct APE, as mandated by Appendix B of the FCC NPA for telecommunication facilities less than 200 ft high. For the purposes of the Class I overview, the review area consists of a 1 mi buffer around the direct APE, per Arizona SHPO requirements.

The direct APE consists of an undeveloped parcel of land adjacent to a modern housing development (Anthem at Merrill Ranch); elevation is approximately 1,460 ft above mean sea level (amsl). Native vegetation consists of creosotebush.

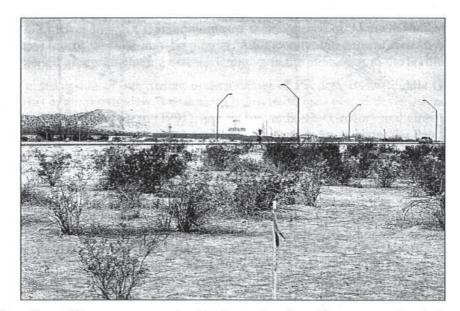


Figure 1. Overview of the new communication tower location. Orange cone in photograph marks the center of the communication tower location; the pink flag in the foreground marks the southeast center of the direct APE. View is to northwest.

Summary and Recommendations

ACS' Class I cultural resource literature review and visual impact assessment for the new Town of Florence 179-ft-tall communication tower located at the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development identified no cultural resources within the direct APE, so ACS recommends a finding of no historic properties affected within the direct APE.

Five cultural resources that have been previously recommended eligible for the National Register occur within the visual APE; all of these are Hohokam artifact scatters. Two of these (AZ U:15:497–498[ASM]) have been mitigated as part of the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development and no longer exist. Three others (AZ U:15:469–471[ASM]) are located in undisturbed areas; however, the data that they contain will not be compromised by visual impacts. As a result, ACS also recommends a finding of no historic properties affected in the visual APE.

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SHPO-2011-0422(92741)

JUN 27 2011

June 24, 2011

Town of Florence

775 N. Main Street P.O. Box 2670 Florence, Arizona 85232

(520) 868-7500 fax (520) 868-7501 TDD (520) 868-7502

www.town.florence.az.us

Arizona State Parks Department State Historic Preservation Office 1300 W. Washington Street Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Att: Erick M. Laurila, Compliance Specialist/Archaeologist

TOWN SERVICES

Building Inspection 868-7556

Finance 868-7624

Fire 868-7609

Grants 868-7554

Library 868-0788

Municipal Court 868-7514

> Personnel 868-7553

Parks & Recreation 868-4835

Planning and Zoning 868-7540

> Police 868-5873

Public Works 868-7620

Senior Center 868-7622

> Town Hall 868-7500

Town Manager's Office 868-7558

> Utility Building 868-7680

Dear Mr. Laurila,

Ref: SHPO-2011-0422

In response to your email of 5/13/2011, please find included with this letter; 1) A Class 1 Cultural Resource Literature Review prepared by Archaeological Consulting Services, LTD, and 2) A copy of FCC Form 620, Section 106 New Tower Submission for the Town of Florence for a new public safety communications tower located on the Community Parcel in the Anthem at Merrill Ranch development in Florence, Arizona. This tower and accompanying equipment are being funded in part through a grant from the Arizona Department of Homeland Security.

Archaeological Consulting Services, LTD has identified no cultural resources within the direct APE, and recommends a finding of no historic properties affected within the direct APE. They also recommend a finding of no historic properties affected in the visual APE. The Town of Florence requests your review of, and concurrence with, the findings of Archaeological Consulting Services, LTD.

Thank you for your attention to the Town's request. Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

CONCURNITE

Arizona State Historic Preservation Office

· Sincerely,

1

Bill Norman - Grants Writer

Phone: 520-868-7513 Fax: 520-868-7501

bill.norman@florenceaz.gov

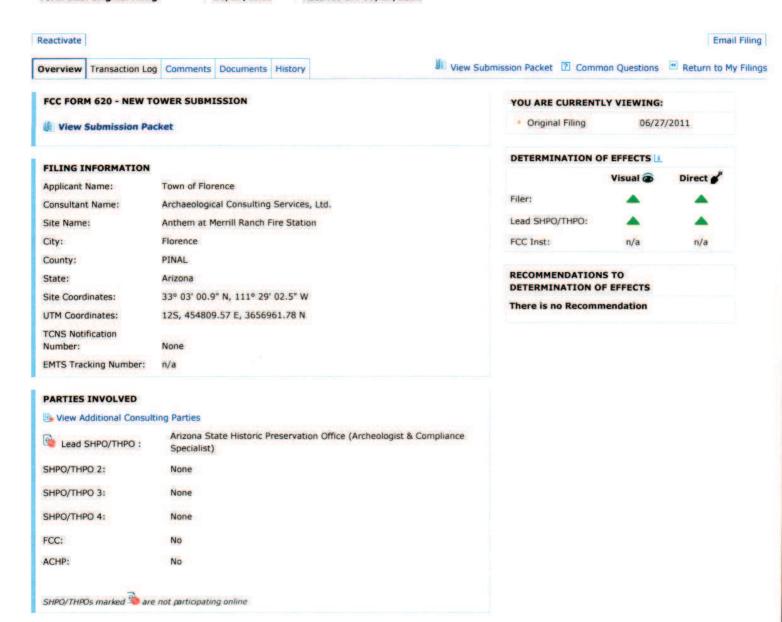
Logged In: 0020672788 (Log Out)

Help | Technical Support

My Filings | New Filing | TCNS

File Number: 0004779502 Form 620: Original Filing Notification Date: 06/27/2011

Current Status: Closed Received On: 06/24/2011



Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554 Phone: 1-877-480-3201 TTY: 1-717-338-2824 Submit Help Request