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New PTS Partnership Improves Campus Safety

The Associated Students of Arizona State University (ASASU), the ASU student government, has always had a positive impact on the university community. The Safety Escort Service is one of the best services that ASASU oversees, and it has been a part of the Tempe campus since 1981. However, changes were needed to help improve the service and ASU Parking and Transit Services was proud to step in and help.

The Safety Escort Service (SES) is a free program run by the Undergraduate Student Government (USG). USG is one of the three branches of ASASU. SES ensures students, faculty, and staff a safer alternative than walking alone to campus parking lots, structures and residence halls. It is entirely operated and managed by student employees and volunteers.

During the 2003-04 school year, the USG along with other organizations, received several suggestions from students, faculty and staff. Concerns focused on SES operation hours not extending past midnight and its inability to serve anyone going to or from the Brickyard, Apache Commons or the University Services Building. The service was also limited by its exclusive utilization of golf carts to provide rides.

"The service needed to improve for the future," said Julie Johnson, vice-president of USG. "Due to the plans for ASU in the next five years, and that the number of students on the Tempe campus is expected to double, safety is one of the biggest issues. The service is very important today, but it also needed to improve in preparation for the future students of this campus."

"Linda Riegel called and stated that Parking and Transit Services wanted to help the program," added Johnson.

Parking and Transit Services, as part of their partnership with ASASU, has since doubled the Safety Escort Services annual staff budget which has enabled the service to heavily increase operation hours. Beginning spring '05, the Safety Escort Service will operate from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m., seven nights a week. The service previously operated from 7 p.m. to midnight, six nights a week.

"We were interested in partnering with the Safety Escort Service because we believe it is a worthwhile service that enhances campus safety," said Riegel. "Since some of the escorts are to and from parking lots, we believed it was very appropriate for us to work together."

Additional financing from PTS has also provided the program to support services to the Brickyard, Apache Commons and the University Services Building as well as enhancing SES to the disabled community. New services to those areas was made possible by a new van, which was procured by Parking and Transit Services so that SES could safely extend their coverage as the ASU community continues to grow.

"I am excited to work with PTS in order to better serve all ASU students, faculty and staff," said Johnson. "I think the improvements the Safety Escort Service has been able to make because of our PTS partnership will improve the student experience now and particularly in the future as more students live on campus and as ASU truly becomes an active community, 24 hours a day."

"Parking and Transit Services has been amazing in this project," added Johnson. "They really came through for the students of ASU and helped out with a student run program that is focused on students helping students."

PTS was also able to assist the Safety Escort Service in adding a paid student supervisor night-time position. The position will assist the current director with program over-sight and consistency.

"This partnership provides a win-win scenario for the campus community, the Safety Escort Service and Parking and Transit Services," added Riegel. "Julie Johnson of ASASU, in particular, did a great job researching the needs of the Safety Escort Service, alternative options and putting a proposal together for us to consider."