

Sentinel Elementary District No. 71 Community Profile

Our caring and cooperative community makes Sentinel a truly special place. Local parents and community members take an active role in the upbringing and education of our students. The Sentinel one-school district operates the school to be community resources, where people come together, share ideas, and work for the benefit of our students.

Sentinel is located north of the Mexico border on Interstate 8, between Yuma, Arizona and Phoenix. Our community originally served as a water stop along the railroad lines during the 1920's. At that time, the old steam engines had to stop every five to six miles for water. In 1903, Sentinel School opened for the first time. The school was taught in a boxcar provided by the railroad who also provided lights, water and heating. The first school trustees were C.A. Gray, Allen Shroud and F.W. Jordan. The first schoolteacher on record was Miss Alma Forester. In 1904 the school closed and did not open again until 1913. Sentinel School closed two years later. The school was reestablished on June 25, 1917, by a unanimous vote of the Trustees. Sentinel Elementary District No. 71 has remained open continuously since that time. In 1922 Miss Alma Forester married Mr. John McGann who was a prominent citizen of the Sentinel community. The school was in one building until the mid-1970's. The current school was built in 2003 with the support of the School Facilities Board and includes a 400-meter track. Because of the unique environment, the military still uses the Sentinel and surrounding area for periodic training and many of the troops serving in the Middle East trained in the area. At one time, there was a hot spring located in Agua Caliente, just a few miles from Sentinel--an exclusive resort visited by many of the famous movie stars of the era.

Generations of people have visited us in Sentinel during their travels across southern Arizona. Today, we're known for our friendly, small-town way of life and our strong agriculture-based economy. Local farming includes dates, fish farms, dairies and alfalfa. The influx of solar plants has brought and is continuing to bring a strong tax base for the area.
