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Contact:
Jay Headley
bonebrake68@yahoo.com
(602) 403-1859

Third Annual Phoenix 'Tour de Coops' Puts Backyard Chickens on Center Stage

Phoenix, AZ - November 11, 2011: The third annual self-guided tour of urban chicken coops in the central Phoenix area is set to kick off on December 3, 2011 from 7:30am to 4:30pm.

Tour de Coops is a family-friendly, day long event where sightseers can meet local chicken coop owners and their chickens, and see over 20 of the most unique and funky chicken coops in the central Phoenix area. The self-guided tour allows folks to go at their own pace and visit the coops they are interested in while interacting with coop owners who are participating in hands-on urban sustainability.

"Tour de Coops is a fun way for families and other chicken-minded people to learn how others are raising chickens for eggs and meat in an urban environment," says Bryan White, a third year coop host. "It's really a fun way to teach kids and adults about a more sustainable way of living. It's so easy to keep chickens and they are really great for the kids. If you're interested in keeping chicken for eggs or meat or simply want some new ideas, this is a great way to get started".

Organized by the Valley Permaculture Alliance (formerly the Phoenix Permaculture Guild), the tour was created to give the community insight into the experience of raising chickens and other poultry in an urban setting, while inspiring them to start their own backyard flocks.

New to the tour this year is a guided bike tour. For those who prefer pedal-power, Tour de Coops will be offering a guided bike tour that loops through central Phoenix and will visit around 20 coops. The bike tour will start at the Roosevelt Growhouse with a stop for self-funded lunch at Lux Central/Pane Bianco. More information about the bike tour will be revealed at TourDeCoops.org.

Coop owners will be the first to tell you the benefits of keeping chicken in your backyard and site that it provides not only enjoyment, entertainment and ethically-raised eggs and meat, but helps to support their gardens. Chickens help in the garden by controlling pests, providing nutrient rich compostable manure and eating discarded garden scraps.

There is a nation-wide grassroots craze for keeping backyard chickens and Phoenix is not alone. Cities large and small host annual coops tours such as Portland, Seattle, Madison, Bend, and Austin. The VPA is thrilled with the overwhelming interest in last year's event and is looking forward to an even larger turn out at this years event.

Tickets for the event are on sale now, but are limited. Price of admission is \$10 per adult and children under 18 are free with the purchase of an adult ticket. Tickets can be purchased online at TourDeCoops.org. Bring your pre-purchased ticket to one of the two start locations on the day if the event to begin your tour: Duck & Decanter at 1651 E. Camelback or the Roosevelt Growhouse at 902 N. 6th St. in downtown Phoenix.

About The Valley Permaculture Alliance:

The Valley Permaculture Alliance is a local 501c3 non-profit, and operates as a volunteer run organization. The mission of the VPA is to inspire sustainable urban living through education, community involvement and creative cooperation. Programs offered include tours of local sustainable homes, educational classes, hands-on training and event demonstration booths. As well as annual events including the VPA Fruit Tree Sale, Mesquite Bean Milling, Pancake Breakfast and Tour de Coops.

Permaculture is a term that combines "permanent" and "agriculture / culture" and addresses sustainability and interdependence of human and natural ecosystems. The VPA is committed to the principle of promoting the conscious design of cultivated ecosystems that include diversity, stability, resilience and financial viability.

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