

Star Tower dedicated in Goodyear

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Just as Estrella Parkway is turning from deserted highway to lush Sonoran desert, the new Star Tower marks the way.



Built as the new entryway into Estrella by Newland Communities, the tower was dedicated Wednesday with a ribbon cutting by Goodyear dignitaries.

Estrella residents also showed up in full force to get a first look at the 50-foot tower. It was built as a star observatory, and overlooks the entire Estrella home and park area, including 10 miles of trails.

"I feel that Estrella is an aesthetically planned community; it's gorgeous. And this piece of architecture is fabulous," said resident Joanna Venckus, 63, referring to Star Tower.

As a tribute to the many cultures that have studied the desert night sky, the tower was designed as a spiral configuration, resembling the shape of the Milky Way constellation topped off with a rusted steel sail.

Estrella representatives are already planning astronomy events at the tower.

Newland Communities bought Estrella in 2005 and recently purchased 2,700 additional acres. It now owns 10,000 acres, about half of which are developed.

Greg Bielli, regional president of the Mountain Region for Newland, said the entryway is only the first part of several phases to improve and develop the entire area.

Goodyear Vice Mayor Frank Cavalier has lived in his house on the hill in Estrella for almost a decade. He said he misses the close-knit community Estrella was, but "that's what happens to a community when it grows."

"The tower is very avant-garde, very up to date," he said. "It has this philosophic and historical background that's very symbolic of what Estrella is."