One of the unique things about living in Tucson is the dark night sky. When the weather is clear in an area away from the city, you can see more stars than imaginable. You can even see the Milky Way across the night sky under the right conditions. It's a sight that inspires a feeling of awe. A feeling that we are witnessing something so vast and so much bigger than our understanding of the world. Therefore, the dark night sky must be valued and protected.

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), located here in Tucson, AZ, is the world leader in providing information on how you can do your part to keep our night sky dark, and still be safe. To start, check out the video "Losing the Dark" on the IDA website.

Protecting our dark night sky starts at home. After the sun goes down take a careful look at your home's outdoor lighting. How many exterior lights do you have around your home or property? Have you carefully considered each fixture's need, function, or design? Are you minimizing light pollution on your property? Unfortunately, according to IDA, much of our outdoor residential lighting is inefficient, poorly installed, or altogether unnecessary. Evaluate your lighting based on the chart below.

Misguided lighting practices contribute to light pollution, disrupt wildlife, can impact human health, and waste energy. The use of efficient lighting will save you money while creating a darker sky for all to enjoy.

Are you trying to get your neighbor to change their outdoor lighting? Checkout the International Dark Sky Association's webpage with suggestions on how to approach your neighbor about this issue. Don't hesitate to ask your neighbor for their advice or opinion on solving the problem of light pollution. Goodwill goes a long way.

Join your friends and family and get out and enjoy the dark night sky.