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## **Governor's service award winner** *20-year food bank volunteer Cecil Groves honored*



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KINGMAN - In 1994 Cecil Groves read a volunteers wanted advertisement for the Kingman Area Food Bank. Nearly 20 years later, Groves received a Governor's Volunteer Service Award for his volunteer work at the food bank.

The advertisement said the food bank had "no paid positions," Groves said. "And I thought, 'That's for me.'"

Groves is 92 years old. He was 74 when he started volunteering at the food bank. His first job at the food bank consisted of him taking beans from 50-pound bags and dispersing them to 1-pound bags.

"I started at the bottom," Groves said. "And I've held every position here, from janitor to president of the board."

Currently, Groves is the food bank's operations manager. He is in charge of soliciting donations from the community to help keep the food bank running, and he's good at it. The Kingman Area Food Bank provides approximately 1,000 food boxes a month to families in need.

"He almost single-handedly raised the money to get us this building," said food bank Executive Director Betty Kahlor. "He found people to donate labor, materials and other things to help build (the warehouse)."

The food bank moved to its current location on Butler Avenue from downtown Kingman in 2005. The property it sits on was bought somewhere in 2001 or 2002, Kahlor said. When it was purchased, it was just a building that had at one time been used as a taco shop. The warehouse was built after the purchase by volunteers using donated materials sought out by Groves, she added.

Gov. Jan Brewer presented Groves with the national service category award on April 20 in Mesa. In terms of volunteerism, there is no higher award in Arizona than the Governor's



AHRON SHERMAN/Miner

Longtime volunteer with the Kingman Area Food Bank Cecil Groves stands with Mohave County RSVP Coordinator Nancy Rutherford.

Volunteer Service Award, and although it's based on Groves' volunteer efforts over the last year, he thinks his history as a volunteer helped him win it as well.

Awards cover the walls of his office, but when he points to this award he says, "This is the big one."

Groves joined the Retired Senior Volunteer Program - the organization that nominated him for the award - in 2008. RSVP has been around since 1968. The national organization helps people over the age of 55 find organizations to volunteer for.

"Cecil is the face of the food bank," said Mohave County RSVP Coordinator Nancy Rutherford. "Everyone knows him. It just wouldn't be the same without him."

Mohave County RSVP Director Amy Websdale nominated Groves for the award.

"He is one of the longest serving, oldest RSVP volunteers," Websdale said. "He has an incredible volunteer record with the Kingman Food Bank."

Groves exemplifies the type of volunteers RSVP wants, she said. He's dedicated and responsible, and no matter what is going on in his life, he always comes back, Websdale added.

Groves has been in Kingman for the last 44 years and in Arizona for the last 67. Though he's getting up there in age, Groves continues to volunteer, admitting that in many ways the food bank keeps him alive.

"You can't just go sit down and do nothing," Groves said.