Building boom soon? What the future may hold for Ridgecrest

The city of Ridgecrest appears headed for a building boom in the next few years, thanks to the planned reconstruction of China Lake after the two Ridgecrest earthquakes last July. Although an estimated $3 billion in construction work is reportedly planned for the base over the next five years, the city will obviously reap benefits to industries ranging from hospitality to grocery stores as an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 new people move to Ridgecrest at least temporarily for the reconstruction effort.

Here’s a look at some other projects that are in the works.

HOUSING AND LODGING

New hotels:

One proposed new project is a Towneplace Suites by Marriott hotel. The site plan for this project was approved by the Ridgecrest Planning Commission on Jan. 28. The plan is for a four-story 96-room hotel built on 2.58 acres on the southwest corner of Chelsea Street and Ward Avenue. It would have a total building area of 53,666 square feet with 15 rooms on the first floor and 27 rooms each on floors two through four. The hotel would also have a total of 99 parking spaces. Street improvements associated with the project would include at least curb, gutter, sidewalks and street lights.

Another hotel potentially in the works is a Holiday Inn.

By Jessica Weston
City Editor
jweston@ridgecrestca.com
China Lake: Silver linings begin to follow the July earthquakes

By Thomas Elias
Special to the High Desert Business Journal

At first, the two large earthquakes that rattled Ridgecrest and the rest of the Indian Wells Valley on successive days last July and their untold number of aftershocks seemed like an unmitigated disaster for Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

Fully 26 buildings on the base containing more than 710,000 square feet were damaged so severely in the magnitude 6.4 and 7.1 shocks that they will have to be replaced. At least 14 more will need extensive repairs. The base’s main runway was damaged; so were roads and other aircraft handling facilities.

All were quickly restored to partial mission capability, but for weeks the future of the base was in some doubt.

Big money was needed for repairs and reconstruction: $514 million to replace Hanger 3. $203 million to rebuild the Michelson mission systems integration laboratories. $120 million for air operations, an air traffic control tower and runway apron work. The total rung up would come to between $4.2 billion and $5.2 billion.

But big-bucks funding quickly ended the doubts, with major support in both the Senate and the House, led by California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Kern County Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader and a golfing buddy of President Trump. This soon short-circuited all doubt about the arrival of a lot of money.

One reason that could happen quickly: this base is absolutely critical to the development of weapons – often top secret – for the U.S. Navy. The more than 1.1 million acres covering 140 miles of virtually uninhabited terrain between China Lake and the nearest town directly northeast, Beatty, Nev., give the base uniquely unimpeded airspace for testing fighter jets, missiles and drones.

But China Lake is also vital to the welfare of the Indian Wells Valley, especially the city of Ridgecrest.

“It’s not just pretty important,” said Scott O’Neill, 44-year China Lake engineer who spent 10 years as the top-ranked civilian on the base – came when military spending in general was cut as part of the “peace dividend” following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a time when many Americans naively believed much of the military’s usefulness had ended.

That feeling ended abruptly with 9-11. China Lake has never been seriously threatened – or even pinched – since, despite several rounds of base closures. And the upcoming multi-billion investment in its infrastructure over the next few years assures it won’t be closed anytime in the foreseeable future.

McCarthy called the funds for investment in earthquake recovery at China Lake an “important investment in our communities (that) will help improve the foundation for continued economic growth.”

Added Feinstein, “China Lake is home to one-of-a-kind capabilities for our military, with weapons testing and research that can’t be replicated elsewhere. Its reconstruction is also vital to...Ridgecrest. It was simply a must to rebuild China Lake. I’d also like to thank Ridgecrest Mayor Peggy Breeden for her advocacy and work to get this done.”

A regional water agency, the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority, also acted after the quakes to make sure China Lake can carry out its missions unimpeded. A brand new groundwater sustainability plan, the product of two years of planning and debate, is designed to balance out by 2040 annual pumping from and recharge of the region’s groundwater supplies.

It gives China Lake top priority in water allocations.

All this will be of great benefit to Ridgecrest and possibly to Inyokern and Trona, which took an even larger hit from the quakes than Ridgecrest or China Lake.

Said Ridgecrest City Manager Ron Strand, “We always have to remember that people here went through a very serious event, but it’s looking like there will be a silver lining.”

Mark Gale contributed to this report.

Thomas Elias writes a syndicated column on California public affairs appearing in the Ridgecrest Daily Independent and 92 other California newspapers.
Do you know your
Business Waste Disposal Options
Does your business generate less than 27 gallons or 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month?

Let Kern County Special Waste help you dispose of hazardous waste from your business!

Ridgecrest
Special Waste Facility
3301 Bowman Road
2nd & 4th Saturdays
10 AM - 1 PM

Business Hazardous Waste by appointment only
Call (661) 862-8922 for details

• Oil • Light Bulbs • E-Waste • Cleaning Products • Paints
• Gasoline • Batteries • Pool Chemicals • Pesticides & More!

Please use caution when transporting hazardous waste

For detailed information:

MANDATORY COMMERCIAL RECYCLING

The State of California requires businesses, non-profits, multi-family complexes and organizations that generate four cubic yards or more of solid waste per week to recycle both traditional recyclable materials and organic materials.

How can my business meet these recycling requirements?
Businesses can meet the recycling requirements through a combination of any of the following:

• Subscribe to recycling service through a hauler
• Subscribe to Gardening Services that recycle
• Participate in Edible Food Recovery program
• Participate in food waste recycling program
• Self-haul recyclables

It’s the LAW!

For complete details:
SPECIAL REPORT: EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

Earthquakes: Counting the cost

By Jessica Weston
City Editor
jweston@ridgecrestca.com

With the six-month anniversary of the July 4 and 5 Ridgecrest Earthquakes having come and gone, the community continues to recover from the historic shakers. Although half a year has gone by, the city and other institutions continue to still tallying the costs of the historic natural disaster.

Local impact of quakes

To the chagrin of many, the city did not qualify for federal disaster aid to assist with rebuilding after the earthquakes. According to the Bakersfield Californian, the state put city damages at around $30 million which falls short of the $56 million plus required to qualify for federal assistance.

Many questioned the fairness of this determination, including Ridgecrest Mayor Peggy Breeden, who has described the process as arbitrary and unfair.

The California Seismic Safety Commission also appeared to question the methodology for awarding federal aid. In a report of findings and recommendations from the Ridgecrest earthquakes issued in September, the commission proposed that FEMA base its eligibility thresholds on a percentage of a jurisdiction’s annual gross economic product.

"One size truly doesn't fit all if you're in a more rural area like Ridgecrest and Trona," commission chair Mike Gardner told the Bakersfield Californian in January.

It was common for those visiting Ridgecrest after the quakes to comment on the lack of obvious visible damage. Structures most impacted were mobile homes, many of which were damaged and rendered uninhabitable. As of February some residents remained displaced, although local organizations continued to raise funds to find temporary or permanent housing for them. Some city buildings did sustain relatively minor structural damage.

The Californian quoted Indian Wells Valley Water District general manager Don Zdeba as saying that while water service to customers was never interrupted, the district did develop leaks in a couple of storage tanks had problems with two pumps and minor structural damage to a building totaling about $1 million.

Cerro Coso Community College suffered an estimated nearly $2.3 million in damage according to an initial rough estimate.

The Sierra Sands Unified School District sustained some damage from the quakes and is continuing to recover. SSUSD Superintendent Dave Ostash estimated in January that the district had spent around $3 million on earthquake repairs and hopes to recoup 75 percent of that in reimbursement from the state of California. Ostash said the district completed all absolutely nec-

Essary repairs by early 2020 and that non-exigent work such as repairing cosmetic cracks in plaster and walls and concrete repair is ongoing.

The quakes brought about some big, obvious changes, however. Richmond Elementary had to relocate its students to the old Vieweg Elementary School site, where they remain as of February.

In another obvious impact, the Parker Performing Arts Center at Burroughs High School remained unusable as of February as the result of the earthquakes. Ostash identified repairing this building as the most significant non-exigent repair not yet completed. Without a stage "home," BHS drama has persevered, however. According to instructor Tristan Kratz, the group has continued to stage performances at other on-campus locations such as the multi-use room and are also branching out to present reader's theater productions in other local venues.

Problems with the performing arts center are felt by other organizations as well, since many local groups have used the large venue to stage productions and performances.

The impacts of the quakes also continue on the local entertainment front. Many businesses re-opened quickly and at full capacity. Others, such as Ridgecrest Cinemas — the area's only movie theater — as of February was open with screens still closed. Still others such as Sierra
Ridgecrest stands to benefit as quake recovery means bed tax revenues

By John Watkins
Publisher
jwatkins@ridgecrestca.com

Depending on with whom you speak the figures vary.

But one thing is for certain: the Transient Occupancy Tax assessed on hotel occupants will definitely be on the upswing, perhaps as soon as the third quarter this year, maybe even sooner.

Currently the city is running ahead of budgeted TOT revenue. The 2019-20 budget forecast $1.5 million. Through the first six months the TOT revenue to the city was $907,765.

You can “credit” the earthquake damage rebuild of China Lake for the future revenue. And, you can credit the earthquake damage for the first six months of the current budget cycle, too, as hundreds of news media workers, scientists and Navy/Contractor personnel descended on the city from July to December.

City Manager Ron Strand labels the money as “one time revenue” that will extend for three to five years as the base is being rebuilt. Based on current performance it could be argued TOT revenue to the city could exceed $2 million two years from now.

During that building period Strand expects at least two new hotels to be built, which will also yield additional TOT dollars to the city revenue stream.

Strand notes the money can’t be used for salaries or personnel. “Has to be for one time infrastructure enhancements,” he noted.

Veteran hotelier Daniel Spurgeon, who oversees Springhill Suites by Marriott and the Hampton Inn, concurs with Strand’s estimates. He expects the Town Place Suites by Marriott to break ground very soon.

Additionally Strand feels the long awaited Holiday Inn Express should break ground fairly soon, too.

“It’s going to be busy for sure,” Spurgeon said last week, “but how busy we just don’t know yet.”

“We need more information from the Navy. I think we will have more definitive answers very soon after the Industry Day meeting next week,” he said in reference to the contractor gathering scheduled to be held at Kerr McGee Feb. 15.

In addition to the hotel industry Spurgeon said most businesses in the city should be able to capture some of the construction dollars. He specifically referred to restaurants and convenience stores.

One thing both Strand and Spurgeon were in agreement on is the $4.1 billion China Lake rebuild will be fast tracked.

What that may mean is instead of contractors going home Thursday night, it may be an extended work week, keeping workers in town six days a week.

That would be a further plus for the local economy.
SPECIAL REPORT: EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital continues growth while recovering from earthquakes

By Jack Barnwell
Community Editor
jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital saw some ups and downs over the course of the past year, but continues to make its impression on the healthcare industry in Ridgecrest through growth and consolidation, according to hospital CEO Jim Suver.

Looking back, Suver said that the July earthquakes caused about $2.4 million in damage to its facilities in 2019. Chief among the problems were burst pipes that caused significant water damage in the patient care tower.

He added the repair costs did drag down the hospital’s bottom line for 2019, and there won’t be any government aid for the repair costs.

“Most of the water damage has been repaired and we actually re-plumbed a lot of the new tower,” Suver said. Suver added that the tower, which opened in 2010, was certified as seismically compliant by the state. He noted the original pipes for the tower, which had been soldered, had snapped.

He noted an irony was the hospital’s older buildings, built in the 1960s, fared better during both earthquakes despite state seismic safety laws requiring them to be retrofitted or demolished.

“Those buildings didn’t even have a crack, and even the old 1940s Drummond hospital didn’t have a crack,” Suver said.

Senate Bill 1953, passed in 1994, mandates that all hospital buildings built prior to 1973 be seismically safe by this year. By 2030, they must be able to remain in operation when a major earthquake hits.

The law stems from the 1994 Northridge magnitude 6.7 earthquake, which killed 57 people and injured at least 8,000 more.

The main entrance to Ridgecrest Regional Hospital.

“The state wants us to tear down all of our 1960s buildings and rebuild them,” Suver said. The cost could range between $20 million and $30 million.

“We are pushing back on the state by basically saying the buildings went through a 7.1 earthquake without a scratch,” Suver said.

He added the state’s first response was that the new tower “was built shoddily and that’s why it had all the See RRH, 29

Museum Store • Unique Gifts
Local Information
Open Daily 10a.m. - 5p.m.

100 E Las Flores Ave • Ridgecrest, CA 93555
760-375-6900 • www.maturango.org

New & Used Books
Gifts & More

• Childrens Books
• HUGE SELECTION OF FICTION & NONFICTION
• Wildberry Incense
• Toys By Melissa & Doug
• T Shirts By Out Of Print

SPECIAL ORDERS WELCOMED

RED ROCK BOOKS
206 W Ridgecrest Blvd
760-375-3454
Open Mon-Sat 10-7 Sun, 11-5

SUBMITTED PHOTO

The main entrance to Ridgecrest Regional Hospital.

By Jack Barnwell
Community Editor
jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital saw some ups and downs over the course of the past year, but continues to make its impression on the healthcare industry in Ridgecrest through growth and consolidation, according to hospital CEO Jim Suver.

Looking back, Suver said that the July earthquakes caused about $2.4 million in damage to its facilities in 2019. Chief among the problems were burst pipes that caused significant water damage in the patient care tower.

He added the repair costs did drag down the hospital’s bottom line for 2019, and there won’t be any government aid for the repair costs.

“Most of the water damage has been repaired and we actually re-plumbed a lot of the new tower,” Suver said. Suver added that the tower, which opened in 2010, was certified as seismically compliant by the state. He noted the original pipes for the tower, which had been soldered, had snapped.

He noted an irony was the hospital’s older buildings, built in the 1960s, fared better during both earthquakes despite state seismic safety laws requiring them to be retrofitted or demolished.

“Those buildings didn’t even have a crack, and even the old 1940s Drummond hospital didn’t have a crack,” Suver said.

Senate Bill 1953, passed in 1994, mandates that all hospital buildings built prior to 1973 be seismically safe by this year. By 2030, they must be able to remain in operation when a major earthquake hits.

The law stems from the 1994 Northridge magnitude 6.7 earthquake, which killed 57 people and injured at least 8,000 more.

“The state wants us to tear down all of our 1960s buildings and rebuild them,” Suver said. The cost could range between $20 million and $30 million.

“We are pushing back on the state by basically saying the buildings went through a 7.1 earthquake without a

See RRH, 29
WORLD-CLASS TREATMENT MEETS SMALL-TOWN CARE

Before going out of town, see what your local urology clinic can do for you. Ridgecrest Regional Hospital has teamed up with USC Urology, a part of Keck Medicine of USC, one of the nation’s leading urology programs to bring you comprehensive urologic treatment, conveniently close to home.

**Urologic services includes treatment for:**
- Bladder Cancer
- Endourology
- Kidney Cancer
- Male Infertility
- Men’s Health
- Prostate Cancer
- Pelvic Medicine and Reconstrutive Surgery
- Testis Cancer
- Urology Preventive Medicine

**USC UROLOGY PROVIDERS ON LOCATION AT RRH**

- Andre Berger, MD
- Sumeet K. Bhanvadia, MD
- Inderbir Gill, MD
- Anne Schuckman, MD
- Jeffrey Loh-Doyle, MD
- Mike M. Nguyen, MD
- Shilo Rosenberg, MD
- Daniel Park, PA-C

**Ranked #4 in Adult Urology Hospitals by US News & World Report’s Best Hospitals**

For information and appointments, please call: 760-463-8930
RRH.ORG/UROLOGY
Will 2020 be a big year for real estate in Ridgecrest and the region?

By Thomas Elias
Special to the High Desert Business Journal

Ask almost anyone who works regularly for the success of Ridgecrest and its surrounding Indian Wells Valley, and you’ll hear that 2020 promises a real estate boom in the city and possibly nearby places like Inyokern and Trona.

That’s mostly because of the influx of about 1,500 skilled workers needed to repair and rebuild dozens of buildings and other infrastructure at the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, the majority employer in the area and its economic bell cow. The first 200-plus temporary workers are now being hired by the U.S. Navy, after a Jan. 25 job fair staged at the Ridgecrest American Job Center.

Officials often use the term “transient” when referring to the plumbers, electricians, heavy equipment operators and others who just beginning to arrive for the rebuild following last July’s twin earthquakes. But many may not turn out to be so temporary.

“The last time we had a similar influx came in 1991-’92, when a major geothermal energy unit was built in Trona,” said Ridgecrest City Manager Ron Strand, a former longtime city police officer. “Many of the workers were considered transients at first then, but some stayed because they liked the town.”

Strand and others believe they will see the same phenomenon from the new reconstruction project, expected to last between two and five years.

Even if very few of the new workers – whose number will amount to an instant population increase of 6 percent or more for Ridgecrest – decide to stay, the city’s 18 hotels and motels and its restaurants can expect to operate at or near full capacity for most of the next few years.

No one is precisely certain where all the new civilian workers will live during their job-related stays. Prime contractors for the China Lake rebuild have not yet been chosen and it will be up to them whether to erect trailers or other temporary housing on the base, help workers find their own accommodations or build off-base quarters for them. But many skilled workers will be earning enough to select lodging that’s to their own taste.

That very likely means rental prices for vacant houses and apartments will rise, spurring an off-base construction boom paralleling the work on Navy lands.

“We expect there will be plenty of demand for temporary housing, and some of that will surely be built,” said Scott O’Neill, executive director of the Indian Wells Valley Economic Development Corp. and formerly the top civilian official at China Lake. “We can just sort of let things happen and the base will be fine. But there will also be a lot of leeway to build permanent housing, apartments and more. The real estate market was hot here even before the earthquakes and it has stayed hot.”

City Manager Strand explained that because much of Ridgecrest was built after 1972, when California building codes became more seismically stringent, all but a few residences in the city remained livable after the July shocks. But about 100 mobile home residences were red-tagged as unsafe for habitation, with most of those residents eventually relocated locally.

Ridgecrest Mayor Peggy Breeden, who foresees an influx of permanent residents and businesses because of the new workforce, is optimistic for the city’s future, but empathizes with those who lost their homes.

“It may not have been a regular house, but it was your home and it meant everything to you,” she said. “I know there are a lot of people who are still not over the shock.”

She also foresees significant business growth in her city. “It will come both from those coming to repair the base and those coming in to take care of them,” she said. “We see potential for enormous growth on the base itself, in its permanent workforce because of the rebuilt hangars.”

“Most of the people who work on the base already live in Ridgecrest, and this
Water will be the key to growth in the Indian Wells Valley

By Jack Barnwell
Community Editor
jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

Water — and the associated costs — will determine the direction of growth in the Indian Wells Valley.

This comes after the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority, the agency tasked with managing the basin, approved and submitted its groundwater sustainability per state law known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The overall goal is to reduce water to 12,000 acre-feet per year by 2040 in order to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The plan will plow ahead with new infrastructure and conservation projects to help reduce that impact on the basin, but the costs remain currently conceptual or an unknown.

What is known is that the cost of water in the basin will go up for all stakeholders — from Indian Wells Valley Water District ratepayers to the farmers growing on the west side of the basin.

Residential water use alone — split among the water district, Searles Do-

See WATER, 26
Did you know? AltaOne was first established as the Naval Ordnance Test Station Federal Credit Union in 1947 at China Lake.

Now Serving Our Members Online, by Phone, and at our 11 Member Service Centers:

Ridgcrest
China Lake
Bishop
Lone Pine
California City
Boron
Kernville
Lake Isabella
Tehachapi
Bakersfield - Riverwalk
Bakersfield - Ming

AltaOne Federal Credit Union is here for you! Membership with AltaOne means access to financial products that best fit YOU. Joining AltaOne is easy! If you or a family member live or work within our "field of membership" you likely qualify to join AltaOne!

Once you do, you’ll find a remarkable standard of service, great loan & credit options, and the safe and friendly environment, of an AltaOne Member Service Center near you!

Call, Click or Drop by Today!

AltaOne
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

NCUA
Cal City makes just $134K from taxing cannabis businesses in ‘19

By John D. Bennett
Mojave Desert News

CALIFORNIA CITY – After betting big on the burgeoning legal cannabis industry, California City ended 2019 with $134,148.23 in revenue from cannabis businesses. That amount comes from a total of 13 cannabis businesses that were operating at the end of December 2019 and as of Feb. 7: five distribution, five manufacturing, two cultivation and one store front retail and delivery business.

The revenue is far short of what would be needed to replace revenue from the Measure C parcel tax which expires in four years. Without the Measure C money – or it’s replacement with cannabis tax income – California City is essentially insolvent without major cuts throughout city departments, including police and fire.

Marijuana is the dried flower of the cannabis plant, used as a drug for medical or recreational purposes. Cannabis is the usual term used outside North America, but also the preferred term within most government entities.

The state of California first allowed medicinal use of cannabis for residents over the age of 18 and later expanded that to recreational use for residents over the age of 21.

Although Kern County has outlawed cannabis-related businesses in unincorporated areas, it was left to the cities to decide for themselves. California City and the city of Arvin voted to allow the business within their city limits. California City first authorized medical cannabis cultivation and later expanded that to allow recreational cannabis cultivation and sales.

On June 6, 2017, City voters passed a Cannabis Business Tax. Proceeds of the CBT would be deposited in the City’s General Fund and would be available for any legal municipal purpose. Police, Fire, urgent care, roads, and recreation services are examples of General Fund services that may be funded with tax proceeds.

The CBT applies only to persons or businesses engaging in the Cannabis Industry. It does not apply to personal cultivation, or use of Cannabis, as those terms are defined under State law.

The CBT will apply to these businesses and any other Cannabis Businesses that are allowed under future revisions of the California City Municipal Code, or that otherwise exist. The Municipal Code provisions regulating the number or type of Cannabis Businesses can be amended by the Council. Payment of the tax does not authorize a business that is otherwise not permitted under the Municipal Code.

The initial tax rates for the CBT are:

- $7 annually per square foot of canopy space in a

Greenstone is among the earliest businesses paying tax dollars into California City’s coffers, but so far, there is a big gap between actual revenues and what the city needs to replace the funds after the parcel tax sunsets.
As TOT revenue trends up, so do RACVB revenues

By John Watkins
Publisher
jwatkins@ridgecrestca.com

While the City of Ridgecrest TOT funding is on the upswing, so is the revenue for the Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

In prior years the RACVB relied on "gift funding" from the City of Ridgecrest to maintain its existence and bring tourism and filming revenue to area businesses and hotels.

As the city suffered through revenue hardships, local hotels worked with RAVCB to establish a tax upon themselves and fund the tourism/filming organization.

Filming revenue to the city hotels and businesses has been huge.

In 2018 RACVB reported over $3.9 million in production revenue while dipping to $2.7 in 2019. Big in 2018 was the feature move Top Gun 2 which contributed $2 million over a three month span.

Filming has dropped off somewhat in the early months of 2020. But the RTID revenue for the organization is solid.

The final budget for the organization had not been finalized at press time, but RTID income Oct-Dec is at $139,635, far ahead of the first draft budget.

For the next few years, the organization, like many other businesses in the city and area, will have to rely on the China Lake rebuild for tax base funding.

Reason: few, if any hotel rooms will be available for movie or commercial producers.

A Kia Sportage SUV being filmed for a television commercial moves through Ridgecrest with a California Highway Patrol escort.

The City of Ridgecrest TOT funding is on the upswing, so is the revenue for the Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE – Students with an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics can get hands on experience with modern workshop tools at Edwards’ new TechEd High School Makerspace which officially opened Jan. 29.

“Instead of making things like Pinewood Derby cars, for instance,” said Wang, “students will be making things like 3-D printed prosthetics, robot arms, electric vehicles, drones, custom clothing and pretty much anything you can name.”

The space in building 7210 is equipped with state-of-the-art 3D printers, laser cutters, 3D design software, electrical engineering software and other tools.

“Visitors can come in and we’ll have volunteers here to train our visitors on how to use the tools and visitors will be able to take advantage of the materials and resources we have,” said Program Designer James M. Wang. “We’re also aiming to tap into the STEM ecosystem here at Edwards. What that means is we’re going to work with groups like the robotics team of the STARBASE program and other maker spaces here at Edwards to be able to help with volunteer training, provide custom workshops, share space and really be able to build connections in whatever way we can.”

An Air Force ROTC student at Stanford University, Wang first brought up the idea to 412th Test Wing Commander Brig. Gen. E. John Teichert in May 2019.

“When James briefed this idea to me several months before, I thought it was a great idea and we should try to figure out how to get this into building 7210,” said Teichert. “We’ve spent the last several months making sure we have the tools and the space to be able to open it up.”
NOW HIRING!

NOW HIRING FOR THE FOLLOWING:
Production/Manufacturing
• Forklift operators
• Process operators
• Machine Operators
• Warehouse

Required for Consideration:
• Submit a completed application
• Clean background
• Forklift Certified

Additional requirements may apply based on the client’s requirements of the job assignment.

Positions Available Today in Ridgecrest, Olancha and Trona

Positions Available Today CALL 760-446-3525

For more information please call Brittney Hary or Bill Morse at our office: 760-446-3525

Providing safe & flexible human resource solutions for:
• Light & Heavy Industrial
• Construction & Maintenance
• Plumbing & HVAC
• Warehousing
• Manufacturing & Machine Shops
• Electric & Instrumentation
• Mechanics

Contact the Human Resources experts at Continental Labor and Staffing to learn more about our value-added staffing and safety solutions.

Leaders in Staffing and Safety since 1993

www.clsri.com

BAKERSFIELD
900 MOHAWK STREET, SUITE 120
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309
661.635.0335

RIDGECREST
509 WEST WARD STREET, SUITE A
RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA 93555
760.446.3525
The two Antelope Valley/High Desert Shows will be an economic stimulus for that region. It is estimated over $250,000 will fill business coffers.

Navy’s Blue Angels are coming to Lancaster

The world famous U.S. Navy’s Blue Angels will be making a trip to the high desert as the featured performers of the March 21-22 Los Angeles County Air Show. The event will be held at Fox Field in Lancaster.

In addition to the Blue Angels the U.S. Air Force F22 Raptor demonstration team and Tora! Tora! Tora! will also be part of the show as they recreate the December 7, 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Many other acts are part of the two day show. Prices are:

- General Admission: $20
- Premium box seating: $45 (children ages three and under, free)
- Flight Line Club tickets: $150, Sat.; $135, Sun. (children ages four to 12: $85 (Sat) and $75 (Sun)

To purchase tickets visit: www.lacountyairshow.com.

Air Force Thunderbirds coming to Lancaster

The U.S. Navy Blue Angels perform a maneuver during the squadron’s China Lake show in 2017. The Blue Angels will perform at the Los Angeles County Air Show March 21-22 in Lancaster.


412th Test Wing changes leadership at Edwards Air Force Base


The 412th Test Wing plans, conducts, analyzes, and reports on all flight and ground testing of aircraft, weapons systems, software and components as well as modeling and simulation for the U.S. Air Force. There are three core components for this mission: flying operations, maintenance, and engineering. Through a maintenance group of over 2,000 people and an operations group of 3,000, the test wing maintains and flies an average of 90 aircraft with upwards of 30 different aircraft designs and performs over 7,400 missions (over 1,900 test missions) on an annual basis.

Maj. Gen. Christopher Azzano, Air Force Test Center Commander, officiated the ceremony at Hangar 1600 in front of family members, friends and members of Team Edwards.

“Today, we’re saying farewell to the Teicherts...Brig. Gen. Teichert was recently selected as the next defense attaché to Iraq, where he will be the senior military adviser to the U.S. ambassador,” Azzano said. “He will oversee security cooperation and assistance in the region, and there is no better leader to help protect U.S. interests in this volatile time.”

During his remarks, Teichert thanked his family, colleagues and Team Edwards, who he credits for letting him have a successful tenure as commander, which began in July, 2018.

“This organization does so much to impact our nation, and to truly live up to the needs of our National Defense Strategy, as we serve together here for the warfighter at the Center of the Aerospace Testing Universe,” Teichert said. “...Our true national treasure are our amazing Airmen and their families, and our mission partners, and our community partners. You are a national treasure, and you are the Center of the Aerospace Testing Universe.”

Higer is not new to Edwards AFB and most recently served as former Air Force Test Pilot School Commandant. He assumes command of a Wing of more than 8,000 personnel in the developmental test and evaluation of the F-35, KC-46, F-22, F-16, B-1, B-2, B-52, C-17, C-130, KC-135, Global Hawk, joint remotely piloted aircraft and emerging technologies. Additionally, Col. Higer is now the installation commander responsible for operating the base and supporting more than 11,000 active duty, reserve, and civil service and defense contractors at Edwards, the second largest base in the Air Force.

“It is also an honor to be selected to command the Wing that has the sacred American mission of teaching test fundamentals, like world-class risk management and adaptive test solutions to the next generation of test professionals,” Higer said. “To the members of the 412th Test Wing ... it is truly an honor to be your commander. Our nation has never needed us more, and I am beyond description excited to be your biggest fan and supporter.”
Deer hunting in Sierra Nevada is a boost to the local economies

By Jim Matthews
www.OutdoorNewsService.com

The value of hunting, especially to communities outside of urban centers, is an economic boon to local businesses who cash in on hunting visitors.

Survey data done for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has shown that nationwide more than 700,000 jobs are created because of recreational hunting, with the nation’s hunters pumping more than $22 billion into the economy each year. And even as hunter numbers decline, the economic impact continues to increase.

An exception to that continued economic growth might be California for two reasons:

First, hunter numbers have decline from 850,000 annual licensed hunters in the early 1970s to under 220,000 last year, nearly a 75 percent decline. As the primary funding source for the state wildlife agency, its staff is finally recognizing the golden goose is ailing.

Second, state Department of Fish and Wildlife management changes have reduced hunter opportunity without improving wildlife numbers they are intended to protect and increase. The reduced hunter opportunity has led to far fewer hunters in the field, especially in the Sierra Nevada where tag numbers have plummeted since the late 1970s when the DFW first started implementing its zone management plan.

The good news is that the DFW has initiated work with the state’s deer herds that might finally turn the decline in tag numbers around and grow the herds as more information is gathered and better management decisions can be made.

The helicopter banked over the herd of deer on Sage Flat. Sitting in the open door and strapped to the machine was a wildlife biologist with a net gun. The goal was to capture and place radio collars on deer so the agency could track their movements, define migration and core areas of habitat, and study their survival.

It was the first time in decades the state wildlife agency was starting intensive studies on the deer that live in the southern Sierra Nevada, and the capture just off Highway 395 south of Olancha, was a first step in what is shaping up to become a new wave of comprehensive deer work done statewide.

These deer were on their winter range, explained Evan King, a DFW biologist in charge of this work that will shape the agency’s deer hunting program and management of the herds. These particular deer might live in four different deer hunting zones at some point in their wanderings over the course of a year or two, but the capture was taking place in the X10 hunting zone.

Most of these deer winter on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada in Inyo County, but throughout late spring, summer, and most of the fall, they live in the high elevation meadows in the headwaters of the Kern River and north into Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. The deer zones they might wander into and through include D8, D9, D10, and X10.

King said the capture in the Sage Flat area ended with 48 deer being captured and fitted with radio collars in January. Another 33 deer were captured near Johnsondale on another part of this herd’s range.

King is excited about the work because it will give them new baseline data for managing the herd, and perhaps increase deer hunting opportunity in the region. The portion of the herd that lives in very high elevations in wilderness or in the National Parks are mostly unavailable to hunters. King said he hopes the state might be able to have at least a few limited hunts for these deer when they are more available, and the data he is collecting could lead to this. It wouldn’t be anything new.

See HUNTING, 23
Ridgecrest Quail Forever chapter has been providing water for wildlife over 30 years

By Jim Matthews
www.OutdoorNewsService.com

Larry Boyer, the senior member of the Ridgecrest Chapter of Quail Forever at 80 years old, remembers vividly a story he was told as a young man. One of his older friends remembers the desert valleys from Inyokern to Trona a bit differently than they are today.

“He remembered when the grass around here was up to the bellies of the cattle, but that was probably in the 19-teens,” said Boyer. “In those days the desert had a lot more water and there was more rain.”

In those years, there were quail everywhere, and even Boyer and his junior sidekick Danny Zurn who is a young 77, remember the years when valley quail could be found across the desert flats and foothills. Today, outside of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, there are only small pockets of valley and Gambel’s

See QUAIL, 21
Does the state really know best on almost everything?

It’s beginning to seem as if many leading elected officials in California believe state government knows best about almost everything in virtually every phase of life. That goes on both macro and micro levels.

Over the last year, this state has threatened city after city with lawsuits for not authorizing enough new housing units to satisfy state officials, even when developers have no great interest in building them. A state commission is demanding other lawsuits if cities and counties don’t do more to reduce homelessness, even where many of the homeless aren’t particularly interested in moving into new shelters, and even while courts in some other states continue issuing bus tickets to California to minor criminals in lieu of sending them to jail.

The Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom reversed voter wishes on rent control, setting up the nation’s toughest regulations on evictions and rent increases less than a year after voters decisively turned down a ballot initiative with the same aims.

Over strong opposition from supposed “beneficiaries,” they passed a law written by San Diego’s Democratic Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez called AB 5 that forces contract workers and freelancers to accept full-time employment from their client companies whether they want it or not, ostensibly so they can be unionized even where only one or two persons are involved.

Newsom wants to send every California 4-year-old to preschool whether their parents want it or not, and his proposed budget would pay to enroll at least 10,000 as a first move.

And the state Senate almost passed the newest version of SB 50, the housing density mandate from Democratic state Sen. Scott Wiener of San Francisco that threatened to make almost every California city as jammed as the Castro District where he lives, which is filled with older wooden apartment buildings that are potential firetraps.

On the micro level, Wiener, whose influence in Sacramento sometimes appears disproportionate to his status as just one of 40 state senators, also proposed a ban on some surgeries for babies born with ambiguous or conflicting genitalia. That bill was decisively voted down in the Senate’s Business and Professions Committee, but as with SB 50, Wiener pledges to keep hammering at it until resistance softens.

The bill, SB 201, would prevent “medically unnecessary” surgery on so-called “intersex” babies until those children are six years old. It included a ban on correcting hypospadias, a common male malady in which there can be multiple urethral openings on the underside of the penis.

Far Wiener, parents’ choices don’t matter when it comes to turning a mild malformation into a normal opening. That’s on the principle that infants cannot express an opinion on whether they want the procedure or not.

Never mind that corrective surgery on this condition is far easier and less painful when the patient is very young; children under six, Wiener has said, have not yet developed their sex or gender identity. And six-year-olds have?

If there’s a condition where parental and medical decisions ought to govern, this is probably it.

No matter, Wiener believes he and the state know best about the most intimate matters, just as he thinks they do about housing density, where he views single family homes on spacious lots as abominations. Talk about a nanny state.

Of course, some state mandates and actions are needed. It’s likely no accident that California has seen no epidemic of measles or whooping cough since toughening vaccination laws over loud objections from some parents.

And Newsom’s plan to provide $1 billion in aid for sheltering the homeless also appears to be proving positive, starting with his rolling out 100 trailers as a temporary palliative measure. While 100 trailers won’t put much of a dent in the state’s homeless populace of more than 150,000, they are providing temporary solutions for some individuals and families.

The need here is for restraint in enforcing legislators’ personal preferences on everyone, but with Sacramento now essentially a one-party capital governed by a full slate of Democratic statewide officials and supermajorities in both houses of the Legislature, there are few restraints on the majority.

So there’s a strong need for self-restraint, an awareness that just getting elected makes no one omniscient.

Email Thomas Elias at tdelias@aol.com. His book, "The Burzynski Breakthrough: The Most Promising Cancer Treatment and the Government’s Campaign to Squelch It," is now available in a soft cover fourth edition. For more Elias columns, visit www.californiafocus.net.
THERE WHEN YOU NEED US MOST...

• Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support Ambulances
  • Servicing the Kern River Valley, Ridgecrest, Inyokern, Trona, Johannesburg, and Randsburg
  • Compassionate Paramedics and EMTs
  • Committed to outstanding patient care
    • State of the art equipment
  • Available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week

For more information call: 760.375.6531
Continued from Page 18

quail left in the desert, most disappearing in the 1960s.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife’s hunter survey data shows the dramatic decline in quail numbers across the state over the last 70s years. In the 1960s and into the 1970s, there were over 2 million valley, Gambel’s and mountain quail harvested by hunters statewide. Since then, the number has been steadily declining, dropping from the 600,000 in the 2000s to just 320,000 in 2016-17 season (the most recent data available).

Boyer, Zurn, and a handful of other hunters in the Ridgecrest region were concerned about the decline and wanted to help. During the 1950s and 60s, the Department of Fish and Game had built 102 gamebird guzzlers, a man-made water catchment that holds rain water year-around for birds and other small wildlife in the region. Most had fallen into disrepair and were not functioning as designed. Most of the local hunters had found these guzzlers and knew they were the key to keeping gamebird populations viable in an area.

This led to the formation of the Ridgecrest Quail Unlimited Chapter, which almost seamlessly transitioned to another non-profit, Quail Forever, in 2005, when QU when out of business.

According to Boyer and Zurn, the group has probably repaired and continues to fill “about half of the guzzlers in our district,” and restoring four more (about the size of Cornish game hen) still had to have permanent water where they could drink during the hot summers. The guzzlers have maintained chukar populations across broad swaths of Kern, Inyo, and San Bernardino counties, especially in areas without much natural water. While total chukar numbers fluctuate, depending on winter and early spring rains that cause desert greenup, the permanent water provides a source that keeps birds in a region.

Boyer and Zurn are happy to talk about the work done each year by the two of them and their small band (10 to 20 regulars who help on work projects) of Quail Forever members, and they all know how important their work is to the thousands of chukar hunters who hunt the region each year from mid-October through the end of January.

“We have a big fundraising banquet every two years,” said Zurn. “It’s the biggest Quail Forever banquet in the state, bigger than any of the others. We have just under 300 guys attend each year, hunters from all over, and people write us checks for $2,000, even $5,000.”

The money all goes toward supplies to repair and maintain guzzlers. The non-profit group tries to get four old guzzlers repaired each year, and go back and make sure the others (already upgraded) don’t need repairs or filling. Last year, the members hauled over 20,000 gallons of water to drinkers because there were a lot of young birds this past season and they drank a lot of water in some areas.

The group has also pioneered the use of a new material to use with the guzzlers. These devices consist of the large apron with catches the rainwater. The water then runs down the apron and is directed into a large, underground tank. There is an opening into the tank and a ramp so the birds and other wildlife can walk down into the tank and get a drink, regardless of the water level. Historically, asphalt or concrete has been used for the apron, but it was very porous and a lot of the water that falls on the apron doesn’t make it to the tank.

The Ridgecrest QF volunteers have been using poly-cloth material that “is tough as hell,” according to Zurn. The 60-mil poly fabric is rolled out on the apron, smoothed and a nifty seam tape used to join pieces to shape the poly to the surface of the old aprons. Rocks are then piled along the edges of the poly apron, and then the rocks are cemented in place.

“Dump a gallon of rain water on this material and at least 95 percent of it ends up in the tank,” said Zurn. He also said it was durable, with some of it being on a couple of guzzlers for over 10 years and still no worse for wear. If the material does get a rip, it is easy to repair with the same tape used to create seams.

Zurn said the material was originally designed to be used as lining on ponds in gold mines, so it has proven very tough and impervious to elements.

“It’s just so much better than asphalt or concrete,” said Boyer.

While Boyer and Zurn don’t do much hunting any more, they still figure they have a couple of more years of working on the guzzlers. They admit it would be nice to get some new, young hunters in the group to keep the tradition going. Most of the other members are getting on it years, too. There is an open invitation.

Hunters or other wildlife enthusiasts interested in helping on Quail Forever projects are always welcome. More information is available at the club’s Face- book page www.facebook.com/RidgecrestQuailForever/.
Putting People Before Politics

Kevin McCarthy is working hard for our community. As our Congressman, Kevin is fighting to advance commonsense solutions to our nation’s problems and working to build a more prosperous future for all our families.

- Securing Funding for Valley Fever
- Reducing Health Care Costs
- Providing Tax Relief
- Creating Quality Jobs

www.McCarthyforCongress.com

Paid for by Kevin McCarthy for Congress
HUNTING
Continued from Page 17

In the late 1970s, the DFW drafted its first, comprehensive statewide deer management plan. The management plan led to the state being carving up into deer hunting zones. This was done so biologists could manage individual herds and herd groups, rather than simply selling tags that could be used statewide. It resulted in a reduction in tag numbers, but the DFW promised to increase opportunity as herd size and management goals allowed.

The X10 deer is roughly located between Lone Pine and Kennedy Meadows between the Kern River on the west and Highway 395 on the east. It side astride the crest of the Sierra Nevada, carving out the Kern River drainage from surrounding deer zone in 1981. It is a good example of how zone system allowed the DFW to try to keep deer herds healthy while allowing hunting opportunity.

That first year, deer tags were available in essentially unlimited numbers for the month-long season that ran from late September through late October and a total of 1,600 tags were issued and those hunters bagged 211 deer. Almost every year since, the DFW has tinkered with season dates and tag numbers.

The following year in 1982, the zone had three different hunts with only a total of 650 tags. There were two late-season hunts that had three-point antler restrictions. Often these were called trophy hunts, where just older age class animals were to be targeted. There were 500 tags for the early hunt, 100 tags for the middle hunt, and just 50 tags for the late season hunt in December.

That last hunt was when the deer were mostly on their winter range, which was the east of the zone in the Sierra canyons on the west side of Highway 395 where deer that summered in inaccessible areas or in parks. On the winter range, the deer were more likely to be seen and hunted. It was the same area where the deer were captured and radio collared last month. But even if some hunters had a special opportunity in X10, there were still 850 hunters who didn't get drawn who had hunted the X10 zone the year before.

The season stayed the same through 1983, but the 1984 season saw more changes, with two December trophy hunts with 50 tags each and just one general season in October. The general October season saw its tag numbers dropped to 600, a further reduction. It stayed that way through 1985.

In 1986, the biologist added a muzzleloader-only season in held in mid-November with 100 tags. This was the period 3 three hunt. They also split the early rifle hunting into two periods, one in September with 400 permits and one October with 300 permits, and the December rifle hunt on the east side was retained as the period four hunt with 50 permits. Total tag numbers were now 850, bumping tag number up 250. The DFW was keeping its promise to hunters to try to increase opportunity without impacting the herd.

This framework stayed the same through 1989, but that was the last year for the period four December hunt and the period three muzzleloader hunt was halted in 1992. No one knew why.

Since 1993, the season has just changed once in 2000 when the two general hunts in September and October (and a total of 700 tags) were again consolidated into a single hunt with just 400 tags running a shorter period of time from late September to mid-October.

Tag numbers dropped from a high of 850 to a low of 400 since it began its zone management system and it went from four distinct hunting opportunities in the zone back to a single season (arguably during the most difficult time of the year to bag a buck).

With the new survey data, tag numbers might just increase again and those late buck hunts on the east slope might return.

Hunters place a radio collar on a deer.

There is a deer tag from 1987 on my desk. It was for the X10 Period-3 muzzleloader hunt. It went unfilled, but not because there were not opportunities. It was because my hunting buddy Jim Akin and I spent much of the nine-day season in mid-November looking for trophy deer, climbing and glassing the hillsides of all the canyons north and south of Olancha. We even backpacked to the top of Haiwee Pass to hunt the

See DEER TAGGING, 28

——

1600 West Avenue J  |  Lancaster, CA 93534  |  661-949-5000  |  avhospital.org

YOUR TRUSTED LOCAL HOSPITAL
meets all of your health needs.
Delivering care for over 60 years,
Antelope Valley Hospital offers:

• EMERGENCY CARE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS
• LEVEL II TRAUMA CENTER
• LABOR & DELIVERY
• PEDIATRICS
• NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU)
• COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY CANCER CENTER
• ADVANCED PRIMARY STROKE CENTER
• CHEST PAIN CENTER
• INSTITUTE FOR HEART & VASCULAR CARE
• INPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE
• MUCH MORE

SPECIAL OFFER!
$91 Off For Our 91st Year In Business*
The Name You Have Trusted Year After Year
91 Years of Environmental Security Since 1929. Call us today! 760-375-2669
* with new annual agreement
China Lake is the world’s premier weapons development center and the economic engine for the Indian Wells Valley

Partner with us to support and improve our base, our community, and our Nation’s Defense

ChinaLakeAlliance.org

FEBRUARY 2020 — THE HIGH DESERT BUSINESS JOURNAL

**WORKSPACE**

*Continued from Page 13*

ago, I slapped the table before he even said a second sentence,” said Teichert. “He is that compelling of a visionary for improving the lives of our family members here at Edwards.

“To me, this is an investment in our youth community here at Edwards as well as anybody that is base affiliated. James had this vision and created this capability in five spaces in the Bay area and he was willing to take a gap quarter from his time at Stanford to come open it up for us. This is an amazing capability for our students in this community, but it is also a template for what we should be able to do Department of Defense-wide for students on military bases throughout the DOD, and those students that are affiliated with those bases. So think about this as the first step in a long journey of creating and igniting a passion for STEM all around the U.S. in DOD facilities.”

An eight-week program will provide an introduction to a career technical education pathway.

“Students are going to learn to understand how the laser cutter works, how CNC machines work and just to get an overview of the technology,” said Wang. “In the weeks following, they’ll actually learn how to use the tools and be able to make designs. We’re prototyping our first year in these eight weeks for students. After I finished my quarter here, I go back and finish my education. I’ll be developing the rest of the curriculum for help from folks in the Graduate School of Education, and come back in the summer to keep developing and teaching it. The goal is to create a scalable curriculum that can be used not only here at Edwards, but also other bases in the Air Force Materiel Command, for instance, across the country.”

The modern workshop differs from the machine shops and wood shops of previous generations in many key aspects, not the least of which is safety.

“The way I describe it, is a 3D printer is as dangerous as a hot glue gun,” said Wang. “It’s basically a glorified hot glue gun. Laser cutters are about as dangerous as a home microwave.”

Wang is currently in a masters and undergraduate degree program at Stanford and will commission in the Air Force in 2021 with a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering. He hopes he’ll be able to transfer out to Edwards doing flight tests and said the space is about more than just engineering.

“One main function of this maker space is yes we’re a technical organization to help teach, but we’re also trying to be a home away from home for students. We have couches, we have space for students to do homework. We just really want this to be a comfortable place for students to come here after school, hang out and feel like a part of the family. We’re super excited to be able to open up today and be able to start classes next week.”

Makerspace workshops aren’t new to Edward, the installation currently has a few that are available to eligible patrons, but what makes the TechEd Makerspace unique is that it’s geared toward high school students and offers a three-year curriculum that’s designed to develop the students.

In addition to the curriculum, Makerspace will have open hours on Fridays and Saturdays with volunteers that can train visitors on how to use the equipment.

Makerspace is just one aspect of continuing education available at Edwards, according to 412th Test Wing STEM Coordinator Helida Haro Vanhoy.

“This is just a part of all the things that we’re trying to do to involve all the local community within the base and outside of the base to learn about science, technology, engineering and mathematics,” she said. “I’m very excited because we’re doing lots of things to connect with our local students. - and when I say local I don’t mean just on base - I mean outside of the base, the surrounding districts around the perimeter of Edwards Air Force Base. We’re going to have a STEM field trip opportunity with lots of hands-on science activities on the ninth of October. It includes the Air Force Research Laboratory, the 412th Test Wing and it also includes NASA. We’re working on all this together to provide lots of science opportunities for the kids. Not only will they be doing hands on activities, but they will be able to meet a lot of employees that work here on base, all sorts of employees – engineers, pilots, mathematicians, scientists – so that the kids can talk to them and make a connection to learn about career technical readiness opportunities for them in the future.”

The Oct. 9 event is a kickoff event of the 2020 Aerospace Valley Air Show taking place at Edwards on Oct. 10 and 11.

In addition to school tours of the base, the Edwards STEM program offers speakers to talk to students on various topics.

“If a school contacts us and says, ‘Hey, you know, we need a female pilot to come and talk about flying,’ then we can do that,” said Vanhoy. “Because we want to make sure that we involve male, female, every race and gender possible. We need to expose our youth to the sciences without any barriers.”

Wang was also presented with certifi- cates of appreciation from representatives for California 36th District Assemblyman Tom Lackey and U.S. Rep. Kevin McCarthy during the opening ceremonies.
facility that uses exclusively artificial lighting
• $5 annually per square foot of canopy space in a facility that uses a combination of natural and supplemental artificial lighting
• $1 annually per square foot of canopy space in a facility that uses no artificial lighting
• 50 cents annually per square foot of canopy space for any nursery
• For testing laboratories: 2% of gross receipts
• For all other Cannabis Businesses: 6% of gross receipts

In addition to city licensing, each business will be required to obtain licensing through the state.

Two storefront and delivery cannabis dispensary licenses and 10 delivery-only cannabis dispensary licenses were awarded during a special meeting of the California City City Council April 27, 2019. The city has placed no limits on licenses for non-retail purposes.

“This has been a long day coming,” said Mayor Chuck McGuire at the time. “It started back two council meetings ago. There's been a lot of work on a lot of areas and there is a lot of different entities for a common goal and I’m excited about today.”

McGuire said that while he does not personally approve or condone the use of marijuana, he is excited about its medicinal uses.

“If it improves their quality of life - one person - then this is the right decision to make,” he said.

Prior to the special meeting staff had ranked applicants according to specific criteria, including: location; qualifications of principals; financials, safety and security and wither it was a local enterprise or majority veteran- or woman-owned business.

It was initially estimated that proceeds from the CBT would be approximately $3.4 million per year and increase as more businesses came online. Access to needed infrastructure, in the form of electricity and water has slowed the opening of some businesses.

California City Supply, operating under the name Greenstone Cannabis Retail Store opened in October 2019 and recently expanded to offer delivery in the High Desert region as well. Located at 6508 California City Blvd., the store front is open 9 a.m to 9 p.m.

In addition to traditional flower – the buds or seed-bearing part of the plant – the store offers concentrates, edibles, drinks, tinctures topicals and pre-rolled cigarettes. All products are factory sealed and then placed in a child-proof bag for additional safety and security after purchase. The flower product samples are sealed in an acrylic container with a built-in magnifying lens to examine the product and a perforated area that allows you to smell the product.

“If you go look us up on WeedMaps, you'll basically see our whole inventory and what the price is,” said co-owner Amanda Adolf at the time. “As we bring in new product, it will be updated instantly.”

The store carries products for both medicinal and recreational users and includes products for pets as well and a mixture of both THC and CBD options.

“The best way to describe the difference is that THC goes to your head and CBD goes to your body,” said Adolf. “If you're looking for something for pain, you want something with a high CBD and a little THC, and if you're looking for something to relax, well and a mixture of both THC and CBD options.

Some $7.5 million in yearly revenue will need to be generated by fiscal year 2023/2024 to replace Measure C funds.

Representatives with some of the businesses not yet up and running have met with city council members and city staff to request for relief from some of the taxes, but the issue has yet to be taken up with the full council.

Partial statement from NASA administrator on FY2021 budget

The following is a partial statement from NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine:

“President Donald Trump’s Fiscal Year 2021 budget for NASA is worthy of 21st century exploration and discovery. The President’s budget invests more than $25 billion in NASA to fortify our innovative human space exploration program while maintaining strong support for our agency’s full suite of science, aeronautics, and technology work.

“The budget proposed represents a 12 percent increase and makes this one of the strongest budgets in NASA history. The reinforced support from the President comes at a critical time as we lay the foundations for landing the first woman and the next man on the South Pole of the Moon by 2024. This budget keeps us firmly on that path.

“We are preparing to achieve pivotal milestones this year in development of the Space Launch System rocket, Orion spacecraft, and the Gateway. These make up the backbone of our Artemis program and are fully supported by this budget. They constitute our ability to build a sustainable lunar presence and eventually send human missions to Mars.

“Most noteworthy, is the President’s direct funding of more than $3 billion for the development of a human landing system. This is the first time we have had direct funding for a human lander since the Apollo Program. We are serious about our 2024 goals, and the President’s budget supports our efforts to get the job done.

“We soon will launch American astronauts on American rockets from American soil for the first time in nearly a decade. This recaptured ability will not only allow us to do more science and more exploration than ever before, but will also broaden commercial activity in low-Earth orbit to support ever greater private partnerships.”
destic Water Company and Inyokern Community Services District — surpassed the targeted safe yield in 2015, according to data in the GSP.

**Projects and their costs**

The GSP highlights various projects — some of which might be viable and others could be set aside due to lack of funding sources.

Chief among the costly programs are two possible sources of imported water, which will be required if the basin wants to achieve a 7,560 AF/year goal by 2040.

One potential project targets the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s Los Angeles Aqueduct, which conveys water from the Owens Valley in Inyo County to LA residents. Capital costs alone are estimated at $55 million minimum.

The other: build a pipeline 50 miles from California City to the IWV in order to hook up to the Antelope Valley East Kern Water Agency’s system. Capital costs start at $177 million and could run through both state and federal-owned land, triggering additional bureaucracy-driven environmental nightmares.

The AVEK project would require at least two booster stations to pump the water to the valley, a 50-mile 28-inch steel pipeline and a steel reservoir to hold 1 million gallons.

On top of the infrastructure project, the IWVGA would need to acquire water rights, which could cost $48.39 million, purchasing a permanent 8,065 acre-feet of State Water Project entitlements at a cost of $6,000 per acre-foot.

Then there are the estimated service costs (transportation, treatment and wheeling) at $5.86 million a year. Annual O&M costs could hit at least $2.3 million.

The LADWP project would require a new turnout from the aqueduct, a 10-mile steel pipe and an 800 acre-foot spreading pond with which water would be used to recharge the basin — all for $55 million.

On top of that is the same $48.39 million water rights purchase, while annual O&M costs are estimated to be $180,000. Annual service costs could be at least $4.26 million.

Either option is still only something on paper and in the conceptual changes, but the LADWP could face an uphill battle politically and legally from Inyo County and residents in the Owens Valley.

When voting on the plan in January, the IWVGA board’s Inyo County rep voted no, citing that it could not support something that would negatively impact Inyo’s economy and environment beyond the damage already imposed by a century of LA taking water from the Owens Valley.

The LA Aqueduct was built to divert the water of Owens River and its tributaries to the aqueduct, which in turn starved Owens Lake of its main source of water.

The now-dry lake has become a dust mitigation nightmare, especially during high wind events.

“Inyo County does support the concept of importing water into the basin, but Inyo County does not support fixing a self-inflicted crisis with a project that threatens the long-term health of its environment and its economy,” John Vallejo, the Inyo rep, said in January.

Inyo County, like its GA partners Kern and San Bernardino counties, have policies that prohibit the exportation of groundwater from its boundaries, and the GSP explicitly spells out that any augmentation efforts using groundwater require the blessing from those agencies’ boards of supervisors.

On top of that, he had added that any plans with DWP would be conditional on Inyo County’s support — something he said does not exist.

Either project would require grants, loans and an aggressive revenue stream to pay for it, something the GSP acknowledges and the groundwater authority will pursue as 2020 and 2021 unfold.

Other projects to augment water supply exist but provide a smaller amount. Included in those are recycled wastewater from the city of Ridgecrest’s wastewater treatment facility.

The city is currently planning to replace the current one, but it is estimated it could provide a little over 2,100 acre-feet a year for various irrigation projects. Capital costs for any one of three projects could run from $10 million to $42 million and include the con-
GROUNDWATER
Continued from Page 26

struction of “purple pipelines” and a water pump station.
As with any treated wastewater project, the city and
the IWVGA would need to go through several permitting
processes with the state before it could even start building.

On top of augmented water supplies are mitigation
projects that could come as a result of continued
pumping until new infrastructure is in place. The GSP
calculates that pumping from the basin will continue
above safe yield, which could cause shallow groundwater
wells to go dry.

To offset that adverse, the GSP calls for a shallow
well mitigation plan for the basin’s approximately 870
shallow wells. That plan would cost $70,000 to develop
and an estimated annual $22,000 to administer. Total
mitigation could hit $1.65 million

How to pay for it — and unknown water costs

While the projects and conceptual costs might provide
initial ballpark figure for what needs to be spent, other
questions loom.

How will the plan’s projects be paid for? More im-
portantly, how much will it cost stakeholders?
The first question may be simpler to answer than the
latter.

Due to the nature of the GSP, it allows the groundwater
authority to begin implementing fees and assessments
in order to administer the basin, execute mitigation
plans and build a war chest for an imported water project.

While it was developing the GSP, the GA board im-
plemented a volumetric monthly assessment on all
major pumpers (the IWV Water District, Searles Valley
Minerals, water mutuals, and agricultural operations)
at $30/AF.Domestic well owners who pumped 2AF/year
or less are exempt from that specific fee.

That fee required only a public hearing and ordinance
to pass.

A new set of fees are already being planned and will
be implemented on top of the current pump fee (which
will sunset when it finally pays off a budget gap in the
GSP development costs).

The caveat, according to IWVGA’s legal team, is that
the new fees will likely require a Proposition 218 hearing.
The Prop. 218 hearing requires that assessments or fees
cannot exceed the cost of providing a service.

One fee is more basic than the other two: adminis-
tration, which can be used for staff, legal costs and
other associated costs.

Mitigation fees, which would be applied to both shal-
low well and dust mitigation projects, would need to
be tailored and accounted specifically for those pur-
poses.

The most controversial of the three fees would be
the augmentation fee, assessed when someone pumps
above a determined allocation. Revenue from that aug-
mentation fee would be applied to augmented water
supply projects like the AVEK/LADWP imported water
project.

The most likely groups to pay that fee would be water
suppliers like the IWV, larger well owners and Searles
Valley Minerals.

However, the basin’s agriculture base might be the
hardest hit by the fee, as they would not be provided
an allocation.

Instead, they’d be assigned an amount from the
46,000 acre-foot block, as determined by the GA board
following a thorough process. Once they hit that amount,
agriculture would either need to pay the augmentation
fee to continue pumping, lease water from another
entity or stop pumping.

The GSP does highlight a “fallowing” program, with
a $9 million budget. The program would allow the GA
to purchase farmers’ water rights for an amount de-
termined on an assessed value of the property. The
process would be decided upon by the GA board, and it
remains unclear whether the offer includes the land
over which the water resides.

Ag-business owners have been vocal about the poten-
tial impact the GSP will have on their operations
and future in the basin, especially Meadowbrook Dairy
and Mojave Pistachios, LLC.

Meadowbrook is the basin’s oldest continuing opera-
tion, in business for over 100 years, while Mojave
Pistachios is a relative newcomer, planting their orchards
less than a decade ago.

Mojave has invested more than $25 million in crops,
labor and other costs into its operation in Inyokern.
About 1,450 of its 3,300 acres have been planted. In
addition, smaller farms that planted around the same
time have invested a combined $9 million.

At the IWVGA’s January meeting Mojave Pistachio’s
attorney Elisabeth L. Esposito noted the plan unfairly
singles out farmers by excluding them from the allocation
process means they will bear the brunt of augmentation
fees, thus subsidizing the cost of importing water into
the basin. She added the plan’s “draconian approach”
would “essentially eviscerate agriculture in the Indian
Wells Valley.”

Esposito also noted the following program’s $9 million
budget isn’t sufficient given the investments made in
the farming community.

“Although the plan does include a fallowing program,
the payment under that program is inadequate to com-
penate participants for their investment,” Esposito
said.

Increased water prices could also adversely impact
Searles Valley Minerals in Trona. SVM is one of the
largest employers in the area, with 500 of its 700 em-
ployees living in Ridgecrest. Initially lumped in with
agriculture in the transient block and given a cliff, SVM
argued that a lack of allocation would be devastating
for the business and local economy.

Without water which it needs for mineral extraction,
it would essentially shut down, leading to a loss in
about 700 local jobs and the lone major company in
Trona, which is already reeling from severe damage
due to the July 2019 earthquakes.

IWVGA board members have stressed Trona’s well-
being is of utmost importance, as well as the continued
existence of SVM as part of the long-term economic
stability in the area.

Other concerns have been raised about the increase
in water, such as the likelihood that it would stymie
the growth of residential and commercial development
and detour new businesses from setting up shop.

While the plan has its critics, the GA’s board of di-
rectors, including Kern County First District Supervisor
Mick Gleason, see it as the only viable solution for local
control.

“The primary reason for this GSP is about self-de-
determination... we need to shape our own future because
it is unacceptable for the state to come in and define
that future,” Gleason said in January.
REAL ESTATE

Continued from Page 8

will give us a golden opportunity to fix what needs fixing and to create an even better city than we already have.”

Among the businesses already committed to move into Ridgecrest are a Panera Bread restaurant and a Panda Express franchise. There will also be a new movie theater offering dinners both to people as they watch films and separately. This will be similar to existing AMC dinner theaters now operating in Los Angeles and other large cities.

Breeden also says she hopes some of the newly-arriving workers will establish businesses once they see there’s a demand for their skills in Ridgecrest and the nearby smaller cities.

“We have a lot of new housing in the pipeline and more will have to be built pretty quickly for the workers the base is hiring,” she said. “That new housing will have to be repaired and maintained. Right now, you might have to wait six months if you need a roofer. So we are certainly hoping some of the new folks will see how good it is living here, in a city of 27,000 where you know almost everyone and a trip to the supermarket is a social experience.”

Breeden also notes that many of the arriving workers will bring children. “We need to create even more recreational opportunities than we already have for both the parents and their children,” she said. “We have a chance to really get parents to want to stay here and that will be a major focus of the city over the next few years.”

O’Neill, the head of the economic development agency, sees the opportunity similarly. “The base hires a lot of young professionals just out of college or graduate school and many of them were already having trouble finding housing before the earthquake,” he said. “We need to create more apartments, duplexes and single family homes for them and the new reconstruction people.”

O’Neill said he and other local officials must work directly with the Navy to develop approaches for housing and otherwise helping new workers adjust to life in the High Desert.

“We need to prepare the ground so contractors coming in here wanting to build can understand there are terrific opportunities here both in the short and long term,” he said. “In the next year, we can expect a lot of action in real estate and construction, especially apartments, new hotels, duplexes, quad-plexes and more. To build those, we have to import even more skilled workers than what the Navy is planning to hire.”

O’Neill’s agency also will urge steel and other building supply dealers to open branches in Ridgecrest for their own convenience and so contractors don’t have to drive to the Antelope Valley, Bakersfield or Los Angeles to examine and order supplies they need.

“We would also like the sales taxes from those transactions to stay in this area,” he said. “We can use that money to improve our parks and facilities – for example, we have only one public gymnasium here that’s not part of a school. But the city’s budget now is only around $8 million, because the Navy pays no property taxes. If we get new construction, we’ll get more property tax and sales tax for the city to make the improvements we need.”

All of which means that the expected real estate and construction boom has the potential to produce major improvements for almost everyone in Ridgecrest.

Thomas Elias writes a syndicated column on California public affairs appearing in the Ridgecrest Daily Independent and 92 other California newspapers.

DEER TAGGING

Continued from Page 23

high ridges and passes coming over from the Kern River drainage.

And we saw them – just never in range of our modern replica muzzleloading rifles.

The deer were just starting into the rut, or breeding season, and the bucks’ necks were swollen and they were sniffing the air to see if a nearby doe was in heat. The deer were already pouring over the Sierra crest into their winter range, and our routine was to glass groups of does early and late each day to see if there were any new, big bucks sniffing around. The bucks were roaming from doe group to doe group and we see different bucks every day, sometimes just glimpses of big bucks as they crested distant ridges or slipped into a patch of junipers.

One evening I made a stalk on a heavy-horned three-point buck, but an errant gust of wind pushed my scent to him and he climbed up the steep hillside to glare at me out of range. I glassed my buddy Akin who was across the canyon, and he gave me a thumbs-down sign. We decided to come back the next morning and hope the buck would be back with the does. He wasn’t. We saw the same little forked-horn and small, three-point, but no sign of the big buck. He had moved on during the night. Our tags stayed in our pockets that year.

My wife had been drawn for the even later Period-4 hunt in December, and we found her a nice three-point buck and she dropped him with one shot. The new Matthews’ family would have venison that winter.

On both hunts, we had meals in now-closed restaurants in Olancha and spent at least a couple of nights in now-closed motels. Did hunters’ spending during the era of late-season hunts in X1O keep those businesses open? Probably not by themselves, but they certainly didn’t hurt the bottom line.
would want to work on you or your kids. We tend to
that want to hide in the desert but are not people I
time takes longer because there are doctors
cialties. Suver noted that some pediatricians have left
recruitment goal is on pediatrics and OB/GYN spe-
were a few concerns with other agency ambulances
helicopter stationed at RRH proved beneficial. There
they decided to come in and take care of patients. We
doctor or fly people in.” Suver said. “Some will have a skill they can use
our own full-time urologist backed up by USC ... we might do some
For this issue because it is very expensive ... locally
Suver noted that the response from hospital staff
during the earthquakes was incredible.
“We actually had too many staff so we had to send
people home,” he said. “Rather than being at home, they decided to come in and take care of patients. We
were fully operational outside.”
He added the benefit of having the Mercy Air 14
helicopter stationed at RRH proved beneficial. There
were a few concerns with other agency ambulances and the hospital used Mercy Air to fly patients out to other locations.

Goals for recruitment
Suver said that going into 2020, the hospital’s primary
recruitment goal is on pediatrics and OB/GYN specialties. Suver noted that some pediatricians have left
due to health reasons or moved on after five years at the hospital; he added the hospital also needs another
OB/GYN specialist.
“Those are our priorities,” Suver said. “Our recruitment
sometimes takes longer because there are doctors that want to hide in the desert but are not people I
would want to work on you or your kids. We tend to
have some time off in 2020, but we just want
sure it’s done right.”
New services coming in 2020 include a urology center in partnership with Keck Medicine, which opens
in January.
“They will be rotating specialists, so one week it
might be someone is a specialist in prostate problems
or someone specialized in female bladder problems,” Suver said. “Eventually we may recruit our own full-
time urologist backed up by USC ... we might do some
minor procedures to get started.”
In terms of its cancer center, conducted as part of a
partnership with the UC Davis Cancer Care Network,
Suver said RRH will partner with Antelope Valley Cancer.
“Rather than have two competing cancer programs
in town, we have formed an agreement with AV Cancer Center ... and have one big great program for our community,” Suver said. Because of the agreement, he said RRH can move forward with its plans for oncology/radiation-based cancer treatment.
This merger will see AV Cancer Center become a
part of the hospital’s existing Cancer Center, in affiliation with UC Davis Health Cancer Care Network. As a result of this union, AV Cancer Center’s Medical Oncologists Amartej Merla, M.D. and Mukund Shah, M.D. will be joining RRH resident Medical Oncologist Everard Hughes, M.D. to perform chemotherapy at the hospital’s Outpatient Pavilion.
Full-time medical oncology care and support at RRH
currently include biopsy, chemotherapy infusions, biotherapy, on-site laboratory testing, chemotherapy medications, diagnosis and prognosis and post-chemo
care and support. Bringing AV Cancer Center together
with RRH will make close-to-home access to cutting
edge radiation oncology a possibility.
In November, the hospital partnered with Alliance
Healthcare to offer a mobile Positron Emission Tomo-
graphy – Computed Tomography services. These
services help detect the early onset of disease before
other imaging tests can.
Suver said that the RRH Foundation also secured
funding for a transport van to help ferry some cancer
patients to and from out-of-town service as the radia-
tion-based treatment takes its toll on the body.
RRH will need to decide what to do with Bella Sera,
the hospital’s skilled nursing facility. RRH leases the
building Bella Sera occupies but requires a lot of main-
tenance. Suver said he was hesitant to put money into
a building the hospital doesn’t own and must decide
whether to purchase the facility or build or re-locate
elsewhere.
He noted that RRH has created its own certified
nursing training program due to difficulty in finding
labor. Suver said hospitals nationwide face the same
problem due to nursing shortage.
“We provided it free for community members, even
though they may not come to work with us in the fu-
ture,” he said. “Someone will have a skill they can use
to find a job in the future ... we’re looking to do more
and more of that.”
RRH recently graduated its first class of eight people,
something he said makes the hospital proud.
“Another part is that if I don’t start replacing my
staff in five years, we won’t have enough staff because of the shortage of healthcare workers,” he said.
While the hospital has plans to build a $35 million
new emergency room, Suver said it will need to go
back to the city of Ridgecrest for approval. The state
signed off on the approval after three years, but the
process took too long.
“The thing is I will not build a new ER with a helicopter
flight path impasse,” Suver said. “We cannot have an
ER without the ability to fly out a sick patient or baby,
or fly people in.”
The original plan for a new ER called for relocating
the helipad to a vacant lot adjacent to the hospital to
accommodate the expansion, but a new four-story
hotel approved to be built across the street would in-
terfere with the flight path. Suver said the hospital is
working with the city on resolving the impasse.
Lanes — the only local bowling alley not on base — have apparently closed for good.

According to Ridgecrest Regional Hospital CEO Jim Suver, the July earthquakes caused about $2.4 million in damage to its facilities. Significant among the problems were burst pipes that caused water damage in the patient care tower. Repair costs did negatively impact the hospital's bottom line for 2019, Suver said. Making matters worse, according to Suver the hospital will not receive any government aid for earthquake repair costs.

**China Lake funded for recovery**

China Lake was hard hit by the quakes, but Vice Admiral Michael Moran said in November that, "There's nobody walking away from any missions that are out here at China Lake." He added that while this does not extend to new missions, the Navy is committed to recapitalizing China Lake. Moran estimated the cost of rebuilding on the base at $4 to $5 billion.

And, indeed, things may be looking good for China Lake. According to China Lake Alliance Executive Director Dave Janiec, developments in February indicate that China Lake may be looking at as much as $3 billion in funding for reconstruction in the next five years. This includes around $2.4 billion for major military construction on the base and an additional $627 million for minor repairs and other items related to reconstruction. These numbers include roughly $1.7 billion from the fiscal year 2020 federal budget as well as appropriated for 2021. The funding for fiscal year 2021 is an appropriation of $1.2 billion, which was approved but not authorized at the time the fiscal year 2020 budget was passed. However, according to Janiec, notification was received that the fiscal year 2021 funds would be available in 2020 due to the emergency nature of the need. The $3 billion estimate also includes an additional long-standing project funded at $45 million.

Meanwhile, the area is gearing up for a building boom. This will provide both challenges and opportunities for the community. Challenges include finding as many locals as possible to work on the reconstruction effort, as well as supplying them materials and housing. In addition to construction, the city is also anticipating increased revenue for the local hospitality industry, supermarkets and retailers supplying the needs of the influx of new workers during the reconstruction boom.

With lots of funding coming in, the area is preparing for a building boom with as many as 1,000 to 2,000 new people expected in town for the larger effort. The Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest announced that it will be adding 200 civilian positions in the coming year to help NAWS China Lake's earthquake recovery efforts.

**Searles Valley plants reopened**

Trona fared worse than Ridgecrest with the earthquakes.

Searles Valley Minerals Director of Governmental and Public affairs Arzell Hale described Trona as "pretty well devastated" by the quakes. Families were still displaced as of February and retail locations were closed, although some had plans to open.

Hale reported that after $30 million in repairs, the Searles Valley plant locations were re-opened after having been closed for 71 days. In addition to repair costs, Hale said the plants lost several million more in lost sales during the closure. He reported that as of early February the plants are still undergoing some repairs but are back in full production.

**Ridgecrest gets a new brand**

The crisis has also given Ridgecrest a new, largely positive, identity.

Ridgecrest was jokingly branded "The earthquake capital of the world" back in the 1990s, but his time the compliments were serious and real.

Local hotels may have felt a brief bump of "disaster tourism" but it was over quickly according to sources. However, it remains to be seen if the designation of Ridgecrest as earthquake survivors will have any positive impact on tourism over the long haul.
Building

Continued from Page 1

The site plan review was approved by the Ridgecrest Planning Commission in September 2018 for a four-story hotel and a pad for a future retail site on 2.46 acres of land on China Lake Boulevard.

City Manager Ron Strand said last year that between the two hotels Ridgecrest could have an increase of 200 hotel rooms.

Mojave View Apartments:

Also in the planning stages is a new affordable housing complex called Mojave View Apartments, to be located at approximately 600 North Norma St. This project would be built on a 5.39-acre parcel by developers Pacific West Communities, Inc. The development is contingent on the developer receiving an Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Grant, in conjunction with the city. The developer is applying for grant funds to build the affordable housing development. The city is applying for grant funds for public improvement projects in the vicinity. The area for the public improvements to be funded by the grant is Las Flores, Norma, Drummond and Felspar. Improvements would include bikeways; pedestrian ADA requirements; landscaping and transit-related amenities, including regional linking services to Bakersfield through Kern transit.

The developer is familiar to the community, having put in the Larkspur Apartments and the Senior Apartments on Downs.

The plan is for a 76-unit multi-family affordable housing project on the property. All units in the development will be for low-income families, except for the on-site manager's unit. In addition, the units will be restricted to affordable housing for 55 years.

Affordable housing is for families that earn up to 60 percent of the median income for Kern County, according to the Planning Commission.

Qualifying income levels are as follows: for two-bedroom units, the qualifying income ranges from $13,140 to $35,040; income ranges from $15,150 to $42,000 for three-bedroom units and for four-bedroom units it ranges from $16,920 to $48,240.

The California Development of Housing and Community Development requires that local governments meeting housing needs for everyone in the community. According to city staff, Regional Housing Needs Allocation or RHNA identified in the housing element identified a need for 321 unaccommodated units by 2023.

This complex would obviously help the city meet affordable housing requirements.

The Ridgecrest City Council in February approved the land sale of surplus land to the developer for the project, contingent on the grant award.

Other apartment complexes:

Ridgecrest is also looking at the potential of hundreds of new units if multi-family complexes Red Rock Villas and Son Land Apartments are built, according to Strand last year. Red Rock Villas proposed for Downs and Bowman and Son Land Apartments is a proposed multi-family complex on East Bataan Avenue and South Sunland Street.

Shopping and Entertainment

Oasis Project shopping center with cinema:

Another major project in the planning stages is the proposed Oasis Project. This would be a 164,829 square foot shopping center, to be developed in phases. The project location is at the southeast corner of China Lake Boulevard and Rader Avenue, north of the Bowman Wash and Bowman Road. Phase 1 would include a much-anticipated 10-screen cinema, along with two retail buildings — including possibly a restaurant and a 11,993 sq. ft. professional office building.

Phase one would also include two graded pads for future retail development along with two drive-thru fast food restaurants located on either side of the main access off China Lake Boulevard.

Phase 2 will include developing the remainder of the project, including additional retail and office space as well as a possible pharmacy and restaurant space. Timing and plans for phase two have not been nailed down yet.

When the city’s Planning Commission approved the tentative parcel map and site plan for the project in July 2019, it included a parking variance allowing the applicant to put in more parking spaces than were originally planned for. The development agreement between the city and G&L China Lake, LLC allows the developer 10 years to develop the project from the date of application for the first building permit for phase 1.

Timbisha Shoshone casino:

After nearly four years of divisiveness and debate, the city in a Jan. 24 news release announced an end to legal disputes with the tribe, clearing the Timbisha Shoshone casino project to finally get going.

Developer Nigel White told the Daily Independent in February that he still hopes to break ground for the project sometime in 2020. White estimated that the casino could be open within 10 months to a year of the groundbreaking.

The project site is 26.5 acres near the northeast corner of the city.

The plan is for casino construction to proceed in phases. Phase 1 would include casino, players club, retail shop, coffee shop and buffet, bar and lounge, meeting space, back of house space, and parking for a total of around 25,000 to 30,000 square feet.

Phase 2 would include a casino expansion and restaurant (approximately 10,000 to 20,000 square feet), plus an additional 52,000 square foot convention center and a 100-room hotel with a swimming pool and outdoor deck area.

The project would total approximately 35,000 to 50,000 square feet of building space plus a 52,000 square foot convention center and 100-room hotel at full buildout.

INdIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT
Watering Restrictions per Ordinance 103

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL Addresses</td>
<td>In March, transition from the anytime schedule above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Addresses</td>
<td>No watering on Mondays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Addresses</td>
<td>Excessive water runoff onto pavement is prohibited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DON'T FORGET TO KEEP YOUR TREES WATERED!!!

Questions?
Call Or Visit
(760) 375-5086
www.iwvwd.com
First Valley Medical Group

K. Sivalingam, M.D, Medical Director 661-726-3724

Specialized in:

- Geriatric-Health Care of Elderly People
- Affordable Health Care for Seniors
- Diabetes
- High Cholesterol
- Depression
- Internal Medicine
- Hypertension
- Heart Problem
- Hormone Treatment

ALL MEDICARE AND MEDICARE HMO’S ACCEPTED

IMMEDIATE APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

Hablamos Español

CAL CITY OFFICE:
21007 Nemophila, Suite B
Cal City, CA 93505
760-373-1256

BORON OFFICE:
12560 Boron Ave.
Boron, CA 93516
661-942-9072

ROSAMOND OFFICE:
1415 Rosamond Blvd, #24
Rosamond, CA 93560
661-256-8200
661-726-3750

QUARTZ HILL OFFICE:
42357 50th St. West, Ste 107
Quartz Hill, CA 93536
661-943-6455

www.firstvalleymedicalgroup.com