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ON THE COVER
Aviation Mechanic 1st Class Brock Beh, a reserve component Sailor assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Operational Support Unit (EODOSU) 7, deploys a Man Transportable Robot System “Talon” Mark 2 from the back of a joint EOD rapid response vehicle during a mobility exercise at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake. EODOSU-7 conducts training for reserve and active component personnel to prepare them for future mobilizations and deployments. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joshua Scott)
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The Chamber is an alliance of business leaders which are the voice of advocacy, providing benefits and services to its members, while creating a strong local economy and promoting the community since 1946.

With over 250 members, the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce includes businesses of various sizes, non-profits and individuals who share their vision – to build community and strengthen the local economy.

The Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce was incorporated on Oct. 9, 1946, and began functioning as the governing body for Ridgecrest, a role the Chamber performed as the community experienced years of rapid growth to keep pace with growth of the Naval Ordinance Test Station at China Lake. During those early years, the Chamber created and disseminated information about the Indian Wells Valley, studied living costs in the community, established the Desert Empire Fair, established a relationship with the China Lake Community Council, and helped bring such amenities as natural gas and street lights to the community. With Chamber assistance, the Desert Empire Fair became a separate entity in 1965.

With the First Annual Congress for Community Progress in 1966, the Chamber began a tradition of hosting events that gave community members an opportunity to learn about community progress and share ideas for the future. This tradition has continued with the annual Economic Outlook Conference.

Over the years, the Chamber has initiated and maintained numerous business promotions and community events, such as ribbon-cuttings, after-hours mixers, Wine Walk events, the very popular Ridgecrest Star Follies, the Small Business Expo, and many other enjoyable events designed to foster the strength of our business community through enhanced communication. The Chamber has also arranged and sponsored numerous workshops to educate the business community on such topics as labor law, marketing, and customer service. The founding of the Ridgecrest Nexus Foundation by the Chamber in 1991 supports the development of cultural and educational projects in the community.

Over the years the Chamber has taken a proactive role to strengthen the community’s economy through the support of the Local Economic Development Corporation beginning in 1981. The LEDC was later used as structure for IWV 2000 in 1994, then the IWV EDC in 2011, now the China Lake Alliance. Relocation and visitors information plus demographics are provided to individuals and businesses interested in relocating to the Indian Wells Valley.

To fulfill our vision, the Chamber regularly provides unique community building activities, events and committees. Here is a brief description of some of the impactful opportunities the Chamber provides.

The Ambassadors: As volunteers, the Ridgecrest Chamber Ambassadors serve as the welcome committee for new members, help with membership campaigns and act as public relations liaisons related to networking and social events sponsored by the Chamber.

Leadership Ridgecrest: As a 9-month program, Leadership Ridgecrest is designed to equip emerging leaders in the Ridgecrest area with the background, networking contacts and mentors to take our community into the future. Students participate in a classroom setting with field trips to an array of the vital agencies and companies in our community.

Young Professionals: The Ridgecrest Young Professionals provide the next generation of Ridgecrest professionals with lasting connections and new opportunities. The Young Professionals are engaged in networking opportunities where they can step outside their comfort zones, meet new people and serve the community.

Members Luncheon: A dynamic and informative 60-minute lunch program specifically geared to the Ridgecrest business community. Held on the second Tuesday of each month from 12-1 p.m., guest speakers focus on a wide variety of community and business topics. Preregistration is highly recommended.

Business After Hours: A monthly showcase of a member business to the rest of the Chamber membership. Held on the third Thursday of each month from 5:30-7 p.m. No RSVP or preregistration is required, just show up and connect with other businesspeople.

Coffee Club: A monthly mixer for those who are ready early in the morning. Coffee Club is a casual opportunity to network with others and is held on the first Thursday of each month from 7:30-9 a.m. at the Chamber office.

IWV Economic Outlook Conference: This annual conference includes guest speakers on topics related to the economy in Ridgecrest and the surrounding area. Held at Kerr McGee Community Center, the Economic Outlook Conference is a highly anticipated event each year.

Star Follies: This annual lip-sync musical show features local businesspeople and Ridgecrest celebrities. The Follies are a must-see show you don’t want to miss!

The Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce is excited about the future! In June of 2019, the Chamber brought in a new Executive Director. Tim Smith has lived in Ridgecrest for 3 years and joins the Chamber having previously served as a pastor in the area as well as the director of a non-profit community coffee house in Seattle, Washington. In bringing Mr. Smith in as the Executive Director, the Chamber is excited about the unique perspective of marketing he brings. The Chamber hopes his new perspective and energy will help move the Chamber forward in their goals of growing membership and expanding existing participation in Chamber events, programs and the community.

After 30 years, the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce recently updated their logo. The new Chamber logo seeks to speak to the Chamber’s continued place in Ridgecrest. The update comes from a desire the Chamber Board has in communicating to the greater community that the Chamber is as alive, active, and relevant today as it has ever been. The most recent iteration of the Chamber logo is simply an update, helping streamline and give a modern feel. With such a great history in Ridgecrest since 1946, the hope of the new logo is to honor the past while moving the Chamber into the future. The branding is intentional; highlighting the beautiful Sierra Nevada Mountains, the majestic sunsets, and the military jets regularly seen flying overhead. The Chamber hopes their new logo is a continued breath of fresh air for all of Ridgecrest.

The earthquakes of July 4 and 5 served as a reminder of the strength of this community. As business worked together and the community rose from the shaking, it was evident that the residents of Ridgecrest are better together and stronger together. The Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce is passionate about “building community and strengthening the economy” and believes they are poised with a great history that can take them into the future.

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce and “Build Community While Strengthening the Economy.”
Since 1947, we’ve been here for you.

More than 70 years ago a sense of neighborly responsibility led to the formation of the Credit Union at China Lake. That was the groundwork, the foundation for what would become today’s sound, well-capitalized institution, AltaOne. What makes AltaOne unique is a devotion to community, and a philosophy that says membership encompasses shared values and individual needs. AltaOne Federal Credit Union is a conduit for success and a helping hand during difficult times.

Under normal circumstances, AltaOne is always ready, willing, and able to crunch the numbers. We will finance your dreams, help you grow your savings, plan your retirement. Under unusual circumstances, when times are particularly tough, AltaOne is ready, willing and able to listen. The credit union wants members to tell them what they need, how can we help? AltaOne offers specialized programs, but there are times when the simplest approach is the most effective. Members can always ask, regardless of the circumstances. Non-members can too! We are not only here with you, we are honored to say: “We are you.”

CORPORATE
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M-F 9-5, Sa 9-4

Member Service Center Locations:
Bakersfield - Ming,
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Bishop, Boron, California City
China Lake (NAWS), Kernville,
Lake Isabella, Lone Pine, Tehachapi

CALL or LIVE CHAT
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M-F 7-7, Sa 9-2
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*Financing available for qualified members. Call an AltaOne representative for terms.
Cerro Coso shapes education in Eastern Sierra

Cerro Coso Community College may have its start as a satellite of the Kern Community College serving East Kern, but in its long history, it’s grown to become the signature higher education institute in the Eastern Sierra Nevada.

The Kern Community College District (KCCD) began offering classes in the Eastern region of Kern County in the 1950s, serving both Edwards Air Force Base and Ridgecrest, providing classes on base and at the high school in the evenings. In 1971 Cerro Coso Community College became an independent college within the KCCD and officially opened on the hill in Ridgecrest in 1973.

Since that time, Cerro Coso has grown steadily to include campuses in Bishop, Mammoth Lakes, Lake Isabella, Tehachapi, Edwards Air Force Base, Ridgecrest, CC Online, and delivers educational services in two prisons. The College encompasses a service area of over 18,500 square miles — the largest service area of any community college in the State of California, serving 85,000 residents in that area.

“I like to say what makes Cerro Coso unique among community colleges in California, is it has more critters than people,” said Cerro Coso College President Jill Board. “As a rural college, it was important that Cerro Coso be creative in expanding access and outreach to students in ‘education deserts’ who live in the far corners of our service area.”

Cerro Coso College embraced the concept of online and distance education early on.

Since 1997, the College has been offering students the option of getting their education in the comfort of their own homes through distance education.

“We were the first community college in California to offer students the opportunity to earn a degree entirely online,” Board said. “Today, the college offers 19 accredited online associate degrees, 18 online certificates, and more than 160 courses every year.”

In addition to traditional and online courses, the college also offers educational opportunities to the state’s incarcerated population.

Since 2015 and the passage of Senate Bill 1391, Cerro Coso has offered college degree programs to inmates at California City Correctional Facility and Tehachapi California Correctional Institution. According to the college’s overview of the Incarcerated Student Education Program, “this investment by the State of California is a unique approach to a successful partnership for rehabilitation and safer communities.”

According to the academic trends available through Cerro Coso, the program has served 1,400 students, with 50% averaging a GPA of 3.75 or higher and 87% overall earning a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Of those served, 245 have earned membership in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Degrees are transferable to four-year universities and colleges, with pathways including associate’s degrees in administration of justice, anthropology, business administration, English and psychology, as well as associate’s degrees in liberal arts with an emphasis on either arts and humanities or social and behavioral sciences.

Cerro Coso has also partnered with several local and national institutions. Its pathways program align with California State University System, allowing for near-seamless transfer to four-year degree programs.

The university also has a partnership with Bellevue University, a private nonprofit college based in Bellevue, Nebraska. The partnership allows Cerro Coso students to access the four-year university’s upper division programs and earn a degree without leaving the Indio Wells Valley. Bellevue University offers over 50 career-related bachelor’s degrees in an online format that line up well with Cerro Coso’s offerings, and students can utilize the library and computer labs at the college as part of the partnership.

Cerro Coso also has partnerships with area schools and school districts, including Sierra Sands Unified School District. Qualifying Sierra Sands high school students can take dual enrollment classes at Cerro Coso through a partnership currently in place.

Cerro Coso also hosts many events and career exploration events throughout the year. Some expose middle school students to the college environment and get them engaged in what they would like to do, while high school students are opened up to the possible careers and technical training the college offers.

“Partnerships with area community organizations and businesses provide new and relevant opportunities to help ensure our students succeed and our communities remain vibrant places to work and live, and they allow us to share resources that add exceptional value in developing programs that produce top performers,” said Board. “At CCC we enjoy our work and meeting those diverse, lifelong educational needs of our communities and developing the potential of our students for better futures. Our commitment to creating a college-going culture is an investment in the economic growth and vitality of our region. We could not do what we do without the strong support of our partners and communities, working together to reshape futures. Their support helps expand the work of the college by helping students to learn and grow, and contributes to everyone’s success.”
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RACVB is on the move, no longer a ‘sleeping giant’

By John Watkins
Publisher

Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is no longer a sleeping giant. Once a sleepy little organization that dabbled in filming and tourism, RACVB is on the move.

Under the guidance of Doug Lueck, Executive Director of the organization, filming over the past two years is at an all time high and tourism is on the “grow.”

The biggest achievement came recently when the organization was designated as a California Welcome Center. The Centers promote tourism locally and throughout the state.

According to Lueck the new center, which should be open next summer, will work with 17 other Visitor Centers. He also noted the new Ridgecrest site should enjoy immediate gratification.

“Our brochures will be located in all centers and it needs to be noted that these Centers are the first recommendations given by travel agencies,” Lueck said.

If history is any path to success, the most recent designation will bode well for the RACVB and Ridgecrest.

On the heels of a 1993 effort when the California Film Commission recognized the Ridgecrest Regional Film Commission as part of becoming Film Liaisons California Statewide (FLICS), filming in the area began to take off.

When Lueck came aboard he immediately put a priority on filming, and the dollars followed.

Last year filming was big business for local businesses and hotels with a total documented Ridgecrest spend being $3.9 million.

This year, despite the earthquakes and a bit of a slowdown in filming, total through August broke the $2.5 million mark.

According to a release from the RACVB, the organization was directly responsible for securing filming sets locally for Fast & Furious 7, Star Wars: The Force Awakens and such classics as the original Iron Man, Planet of the Apes and Jurassic Park.

And of course Top Gun shooting was performed locally in 2018 and twice in 2019. Filming also occurs at Inyokern Airport and the Bureau of Land Management also facilitates filming, too.

RACVB operates with a $500,000 budget that is wholly self supported – no help from any other outside source.

Revenue is garnered by a self imposed tax by the area hoteliers that support the RACVB. While the city does not yield any funds to the organization, they (the city) do take 3% of the special hotel tax.

In addition the city also keeps all of the 10% “bed tax” generated by efforts of RACVB to put “heads in the beds” through events and filming (movies and commercials).

Through August 2019, the special hotel tax from hotels totaled $402,678, down $42,153 from last year.

Elizabeth Nalagan, Executive Director Assistant, identified the top three achievements of the organization as:

• Developing and implementing the start of the district and this earned the support of all Ridgecrest Hotel Owners.
• Spurring the development of Petroglyph Park and median art. Lueck and his wife Meris are credited with origination of the project.
• The designation of the new California Welcome Center.
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Ridgecrest area is a hotspot for filming

By Jessica Weston

When Elaine Hanson went to work for the Bureau of Land Management over 20 years ago, she didn’t realize she was entering the movie business.

Since then, however, she has become BLM’s film program lead, overseeing the many film productions that take place in the area. She has also been recognized for her contributions to the industry. Hanson was named Public Employee of the Year, Federal in the 2016 California On Location Awards, which celebrate members of California’s film industry.

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Continued from Page 10

film and television community who work on location.
In the course of her career, Hanson has supervised scores of productions ranging from music videos, sports shows, reality shows, still photo shoots and major motion pictures from Star Trek V to the original Iron Man. The area has also hosted shoots for video productions, student and independent films.

“Basically I issue all the film permits that are done in the Ridgecrest area on the public lands,” Hanson explained. She said film work takes up around 60 percent of her job and usually at least 30 productions film locally a year.

Usually representatives for a production will contact her or the Ridgecrest Film Commission. She reviews the request and if the BLM grants permission to film on public land she oversees and monitors the film production as well. Film-makers are charged permit fees and land use rental, but this mainly covers costs, according to Hanson.

Hanson and BLM’s job is to protect the land and the animals that live on it.

“We make sure they don’t damage the land or wipe out vegetation or harm wildlife or their habitat,” she said.

Hanson said she normally gives visiting film people a brief lesson in desert preservation as part of her job. “I try to educate them how we take care of the land and why.”

She noted with a laugh that comedian Will Ferrell (who was in town filming Land of the Lost) was extremely interested in this topic.

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“I found him to be intelligent and polite,” he said. “He asked intelligent questions and was engaged and funny.”

Hanson recalled Robert Downey Jr. as witty and charming, and said Mel Gibson (the first celebrity she met when she was just starting out) happily returned her shy wave.

“He was nice, he was very nice,” she said about Gibson.

Popular shooting locations include the Trona Pinnacles, Cuddeback Dry Lake, Jawbone Canyon, Fossil Falls and Olancha Dunes.

“We do have a number of other areas,” Hanson said, “but those are the most popular.”

In addition to the perk of meeting celebrities, Hanson said she enjoys meeting all the film professionals.

“I find most people, the crews and the production people are dedicated and professional and they know their jobs. It’s interesting to work with them.”

Hanson said she enjoys when the crews show up and also when they leave.

“I like taking care of the land when they are here,” she said. “It’s fun to watch it wrap up and its fun to restore the land. I enjoy doing that.”

Hanson and the BLM are just one group engaged in film making in the area. The Inyokern Airport is the scene of many film shoots. According to Airport Administrator Demi Mace, in the last fiscal year the airport brought in $463,976.15 in film location fees.

Monthly fees can vary, she said, and the yearly average for filming in the area is around $100,000. Recent productions as of September 2019 include Lincoln and Hyundai commercials and a music video.

Also key in putting together local production...
tions is the Ridgecrest Regional Film Commission. The RRFC was first recognized by the California Film Commission in 1993, although various projects filmed in the area prior to that. Movies filmed in this area include Hulk, Planet of the Apes, Bulletproof, Hidalgo, Dinosaur, A Man Apart, Wayne’s World 2, Holes, Terminal Velocity, Trensors and Jurassic Park.

The RRFC has a very close relationship with BLM and film liaison Elaine Hanson.

The RRFC also advises private property owners, who don’t always know what to do when they are approached by a production company interested in shooting on their private property.

Of course, as has been widely reported, the Ridgecrest area was used for Top Gun sequel Top Gun: Maverick with Tom Cruise. Filming took place at the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake as well as Cuddeback Dry Lake Bed and the Inyokern Airport.

According to the Bakersfield Californian, Inyokern Airport General Manager Scott Seymour said he was bound by a nondisclosure agreement and could not confirm whether Top Gun: Maverick production took place at the airport. Despite this, the first trailer for the film featured landscape that looked familiar to the Ridgecrest crowd.

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Adam Savage from Mythbusters, Elaine Hanson and Henry Thompson take a moment for the camera during a film shoot in Jawbone Canyon.
Over its 56 years as an incorporated city, and for the decades before then when it was a humble town first known as Crumville and later its current name, the city of Ridgecrest has maintained itself as a community in lockstep with the Navy presence at China Lake. Ridgecrest has also established itself as a place known for many other things — centrally located in the Mojave Desert, it's within a moderate car drive to everywhere. Two-and-half hours on Highway 14 takes people to downtown Los Angeles; three-and-a-half hours takes people to Las Vegas; Lone Pine is 90 minutes north, Bishop is two hours and the skiing opportunities of Mammoth Lakes three hours.

The city is home to the main campus of Cerro Coso Community College, the Desert Empire Fairgrounds and several amenities, including 19 hotels and lodging businesses and two museums.

Ridgecrest has also earned its reputation as the Gateway to Death Valley: it serves as a hub of tourism to the massive desert that draws nearly a million visitors annually from all corners of the globe. It’s the last place from the south entrance of Death Valley to conduct last-minute serious supply shopping and one of the last places to buy gas (Trona being the next town up) before taking on Death Valley.

Recreationally, Ridgecrest offers plenty of activities for all age groups. The City of Ridgecrest Parks and Recreation Department offers several year-round youth-oriented programs in the spring, summer and fall. The activities range from youth sports like flag football, basketball to adult co-ed sports teams. In the summer, activities are expanded to several day camps or sponsored classes like healthy culinary, chess camp or science-based learning. The city’s Kerr McGee Center acts as a central hub for several activities and hosts a gymnasium, two racquetball courts, aerobics room, showers, lockers, preschool, banquet rooms, meeting rooms and a kitchen. The center serves as a host several community auction fundraisers and school sports throughout the year.

The city boasts several parks, including the Kern County-controlled Leroy Jackson Park.
and Petroglyph Park on East Las Flores Avenue, and the city-controlled Freedom, James M. Pearson Memorial, and Upjohn parks. The city also owns Kerr McGee Youth Sports Complex (home to a football and five baseball fields) on South Downs Street and the Leroy Jackson Sports Complex (two lighted softball fields, six tennis courts and three lighted soccer fields) on East French Street.

Some recreational opportunities have been lost, however. The city was forced to close Sgt. John Pinney Memorial Pool after a lawsuit that included stipulations to update the facility to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, depriving the community of the only public swimming pool.

Sierra Lanes Bowling closed in August 2019 after 32 years after sustaining significant damage from the July 4 and 5 Searles Valley earthquakes, leaving the only operational bowling facility to be located aboard China Lake.

The Ridgecrest economy has always been tied to the Navy’s presence at China Lake since its establishment in 1943 when visionaries seized upon the opportunity to secure more than a million acres of public land for future testing and evaluation.

The Navy and Department of Defense are the largest employers in the Indian Wells Valley, with more than 4,000 civilians, about 600 active duty military service members and any family they might bring, and 1,700 contractors spread out among more than 20 tenant commands.

The city’s economy has waxed and waned certainly with changes in federal government spending. Hundreds of Navy billets, or positions, shifted away from China Lake during the rounds of Base and Realignment Closures in the 1990s. With that shift went the hundreds of families.

In a 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closures, China Lake managed to gain millions in infrastructure improvements and missions. The federal furloughs that occurred in the summer of 2013 hit some portions of the Navy and other federal agencies, sending “non-essential” employees home without pay while Congress and the White House attempted a compromise.

The last four years have seen periodic growth at China Lake as they pursued new hirings, both to help with growth and replace a retiring workforce of engineers and scientists.

State-level changes have also provided both boon and bane for the Ridgecrest economy.

In a 2005 round of Base Realignment and Closures, China Lake managed to gain millions in infrastructure improvements and missions. The federal furloughs that occurred in the summer of 2013 hit some portions of the Navy and other federal agencies, sending “non-essential” employees home without pay while Congress and the White House attempted a compromise.

A few have met with overwhelming opposition over the decades, including the public’s rejection of a prison. The city sought to capitalize on the rapidly expanding commercial drone industry by investing in a home-grown company called Monarch, Inc., the successor to the California Unmanned Aircraft Systems initiative based at Inyokern Airport.

The latest test to diversifying the economy involves a proposed casino owned by Death Valley’s Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, which would be established on a piece of property near Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake’s main gate. The casino initially entered escrow to purchase the land and initiated a municipal services agreement, approved by the Ridgecrest City Council in June 2016. However, following the 2018 elections, the casino project remains in limbo, with threats of potential litigation by several parties against the city for breach of contract. The escrow fell through after a deadline for a crucial approval by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs came and went.
Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division
gives the American warfighter the advantage

This summer, a pair of earthquakes thrust Ridgecrest and China Lake into the national spotlight. Questions about impacts and damages came with questions about mission and purpose. What is Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake? Who are the people of Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division? What do they do out there in the desert?

The answer is both simple and complex. NAWCWD exists to research, develop, test, evaluate and acquire weapons systems and disruptive capabilities for our nation’s warfighters. In short, NAWCWD makes sure our U.S. military forces are more lethal, less vulnerable, and have an unfair advantage in conflicts around the world.

It all started during World War II with a California Institute of Technology requirement to test and evaluate rocket technology and the U.S. Navy’s need for an aviation ordnance proving ground. Leaders of both institutions – Dr. Charles C. Lauritsen and Cmdr. Sherman E. Burroughs – combined forces, settling on a desert location 150 miles north of Los Angeles. Naval Ordnance Test Station was formally established in November 1943, as was NAWCWD’s long history of military-civilian partnership in technology development.

But what has come of that partnership? What has NAWCWD contributed?

Weapons technology
In the 1940s, scientists here developed and tested multiple rockets, including the 3.5-inch, 5-inch, and “Tiny Tim,” an 11.75-inch rocket prototyped using oil field piping. The bunker-busting Tiny Tim was the first large aircraft rocket used by the U.S. military.

The 1950s brought the AIM-9 “Sidewinder” into play, which became one of the most used air-to-air guided missiles in the fleet. Sidewinder, an idea hatched in the mid-1940s, received official funding in 1951 and became an official program in 1952. It is still in international use today.

Other developments came to fruition much faster. In July 1950, China Lake personnel developed an improved version of the High Velocity Aircraft Rocket for use against Russian tanks in use during the Korean War. In less than 30 days, they delivered the Anti-Tank Aircraft Rocket, commonly known as RAM. Its first com-

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like the HARM or AARGM would follow. Aircraft avionics and soft-
ware test and development, human survivability testing, target devel-
opment. The first AV-8B Harrier flight using biofuel blends and the
first F-35 Lightning II live fire tests launched from China Lake.
The demand for NAWCWD technology and expertise grows every
year, with FY18 yielding $1.8 billion in new orders.

Facilities
It takes a lot of specialized infrastructure to support the technologi-
cal innovation NAWCWD is known for. Over the years, the command
has evolved and expanded, adding one-of-a-kind laboratories and test
facilities, extensive instrumented range complexes, and expertise in
such wide-ranging fields as radar technology, virtual reality, and rock-
et propulsion. A few examples follow:
• NAWCWD China Lake Land Ranges include more than 1.1 mil-
lion acres of controlled space, allowing air and ground testing of the
latest weapons and electronic warfare systems in the U.S. military's
inventory.
• The China Lake Propulsion Laboratories represent the most com-
prehensive center for RDT&E for energetics for rockets, guided mis-
siles, and free-fall weapons. Comprised of more than 100 specialized
labs, the CLPL allows everything from concept development to proto-
typing and testing of explosives and propellants.
• The Weapons Survivability Laboratory is another critical testing
asset, encompassing five major test sites that together comprise
the military's largest live fire test and evaluation facility. The facility in-
cludes High-Velocity Airflow Systems and the Missile Engagement
Threat Simulator, which test the survivability of aircraft in threat-rep-
resentative environments, increasing aircraft survivability and keep-

ing our nation's aviators safe.
• In addition to such live testing facilities like the CLPL, NAWCWD
also has advanced simulation facilities like the Integrated Battlespace
Arena. IBAR connects multiple Navy laboratories across the United
States, able to simulate scenarios with a wide variety of complexity
and detail. The high degree of fidelity and flexibility allows some test-
ing windows to be reduced from years to months while reducing costs
associated with live testing.

People
It's not the ranges and facilities, however, that make NAWCWD an
RDT&E powerhouse; it's the people and the relationships they've
forged. Since 1943, China Lake has operated as a military-civilian
partnership focused on warfighter-centered RDT&E. Military experi-
tion and knowledge in support of the warfighter, so that every Soldier, Sailor, Air-
man and Marine who raises their hand to serve has the advantage in
today's ever-changing global environment.
Little town of Inyokern has a lot to offer

By Lauren Jennings

If you live here in Ridgecrest, you’re probably quite familiar with the “Sunshine Capital of America” — Inyokern.

Located on the West side of the Indian Wells Valley, Inyokern has a lot to offer to Ridgecrest residents, passersby, non-California residents... as well as people who live outside of the country.

The town gets its name from its location. Inyokern borders both the Inyo and Kern Counties, hence, Inyokern.

The town gets its nickname of being the “Sunshine Capital of America” because it “has the best environmental conditions in the country. ... Inyokern covers 11 square miles of Kern County in the dust-choked Mojave Desert. Those 11 square miles receive more solar insolation annually than any other comparably sized locale in North America,” Forbes reported in 2008.

Because of the amount of sunshine that Inyokern receives, the town sees an incredible amount of wildflowers during the spring, which is just one of the attractions that Inyokern provides.

Another popular spot is the Inyokern Airport, where multiple films and television shows have been made, including “Top Gun 2” and “American Pickers.”

The airport originated in the 1950s when it began scheduled services. The airport directors terminated their most recent contract allowing daily flights to LAX back in 2017.

The airport also used to hold drag racing events, but as of 2005, the drag strip was closed.

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The Inyokern airport also houses the Sierra Soaring club. The club owns three different types of sailplanes: the Blanik L-23, the Schweizer 1-34 and the Schweizer 1-35.

The Blanik L-23 is used for flight training and rides, the Schweizer 1-34 is used for local and cross-country soaring and the Schweizer 1-35 is used for local and cross-country soaring.

According to the Inyokern Chamber of Commerce website, the SSC’s two-seat glider is inoperable for an indefinite amount of time. That means there are no glider rides available until further notice.

One of the interesting attractions near Inyokern includes a ghost town located south of town: Robber’s Roost Ranch. Technically, Robber’s Roost is an unincorporated part of Kern County found in the Scodie Mountains. The history of Robber’s Roost begins in the 1870s. Tiburcio Vasquez, a notorious bandit gang leader, was known for coordinating holdups near Inyokern.

Another attraction near Inyokern includes the Indian Wells Valley Brewing Company. Also known as “The Biggest, Little Brewery in the World,” IJVBC produces over 20 styles of beer each year and over 100 flavors of soda.

The brewing company uses a historic artisan spring to produce their beer and water.

“Our spring has its origins high in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Geologists believe that melted waters from Mount Whitney snowpacks journey by [an] underground river and follow through a fissure to form Indian Wells Spring,” the IJVBC website said.

The brewing company has been run by the same family for three generations, beginning in the 1960s when the site became the Indian Wells Lodge. In 1995, the lodge expanded into including a brewing company.

Every year, the brewing company holds an annual Oktoberfest around the first week of October, as well as the Springfest in late May.

Inyokern also houses a handful of restaurants within the town, including Bernardino’s Restaurant, Classic Burgers and Fingers Pub, marking nearly all of the restaurants in town.

Because of the town’s proximity to Ridgecrest and other nearby locations, there are also many activities and sights to see within traveling distance from Inyokern. If you are up for a challenge, the Owens Peak trail is right outside of Inyokern.

Summitpost.org describes the hike as “short but intense, gaining around 2,850 feet in around [two] miles. The views from the top are impressive. Telescope peak can be seen to the East, Mt. Whitney, Langley and Olancha to the North, Lake Isabella to the West, and desert views all around you. The route up is mostly a hike, but does involve scrambling on some class [two] granite slabs and one short boulder hop before that.”

The Five Fingers trail is also located around the same location as the Owens Peak trail, offering other impressive sights.

“Five Fingers is a dramatic up-rising of barren rock along the Southeast ridge which extends from Owens Peak to the Indian Wells Valley floor. The peak overlooks the junction of Highways 14 and 395 outside of Ridgecrest and thus is easily noticed by those traveling the corridor between Southern California and the Eastern Sierra Nevada,” Summitpost.org said.

Inyokern also is home to Inyokern Elementary, which is in the Sierra Sands Unified School District. The school has under 200 students and teaches children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Inyokern also has a Community Service District with five elected officials. Each official serves four-year staggered terms.

According to the Kern County site, the elected officials duties are “Council shall advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters relating to unincorporated area of Inyokern; by County and by other local governmental agencies including but not limited to advice on matter of public health, safety, welfare, public works and planning as authorized by Government.”

Inyokern has a lot to offer, whether it be restaurants, schools, sights or flights. The town has a little something for everyone.
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By John Watkins
Publisher

"... We believe in providing world class care close to home."
"... We hope to serve the people in the Southern Sierra Region with the highest quality healthcare, in a compassionate environment."
"... We provide a primary source for wellness, as well as treatment, for the entire community."

The above can best describe the mission of Ridgecrest Regional Hospital. Make no doubt about it, Ridgecrest Regional Hospital is the area’s premier medical facility ... and it is even going to get better.

RRH recently completed the purchase of Liberty Ambulance and is

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Emergency workers coordinate their efforts and make the best of a shaky situation in the aftermath of a 6.4 earthquake on July 4.

FILE PHOTO

Temporary VIP Housing

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working with an air ambulance company as well to complete an effort to bring all inclusive medical services to Southern Sierra communities.

Success of RRH is very simple.
President and CEO Jim Suver is a forward thinker who continually plans for improvement at all facets of RRH and its ancillary services. Consider:
• Working agreement with Keck Medicine of USC.
• Local cancer center in partnership with University of California, Davis cancer care network.
• The development of a virtual care clinic (via live chat, board certified doctors and nurse practitioners provide medical knowledge, diagnosis and treatment through video chat.)
• Several programs serving the area through collaboration with the Kern County Medical Health Department.

The recent earthquake was a temporary setback for RRH but the medical facility has rebounded nicely. RRH spent over $70 million pre July quake to ensure the hospital would be able to survive a major earthquake and remain open.
However, that was not the case.
The hospital was structurally sound but the earthquakes forced RRH to temporarily evacuate as a precaution.
Cause was broken pipes which flooded a mechanical room and electrical equipment. Water also leaked into the operating rooms and elevator shafts.
At a time when standards are being updated, it was noted by Suver in an Associated Press article the only way the hospital was able to stay open was the use of its 1960s buildings that survived the earthquake.
Suver said those buildings were scheduled for a retrofit or replacement in the next decade.
Speaking to the new 2030 standards Suver says he completely understands the need for upgrades but he cautions “the new standards will be expensive.”
So as the hospital plans for the future, they are also continuing to be proactive in medical services.
Recently the hospital purchased Liberty Ambulance and have plans to increase service on the ground and in the air. A new heliport is on the drawing pad for the hospital.
Additionally RRH offers over 40 specialized services.
Considering the past, present and future of RRH it would appear the area is on solid ground when it comes to medical care.
The IWV Groundwater Authority’s role

W
ater has always been a driving force in the Indian Wells Valley. It shapes policy, ensures that the valley is livable and drives conversations on the future of sustainability. For the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority, managing the basin will become a trust as it establishes a new sustainability plan in less than six months.

The new state-regulated entity comprises five general voting members — Kern County, the city of Ridgecrest and Indian Wells Valley, Inyo and San Bernardino counties. The U.S. Navy and Bureau of Land Management also have seats on the board of directors as non-voting associate members.

The IWVGA also has input from stakeholders in the valley — whether it’s small and large agricultural interests, homeowners, resource conservation or domestic well owners — in the form of two advisory committees.

The technical advisory committee tackles the more technical details of the draft sustainability plan and groundwater modeling scenarios generated by the groundwater authority's water resources manager, Stetson Engineers. The policy advisory committee tackles how the plan will be implemented once it is submitted to the California Department of Water Resources.

The purpose of the groundwater sustainability plan is to create a viable way to ensure the basin meets a sustainable goal by 2040 or 2045 and continue them over a 50-year period. In order to do that, the basin must decrease the amount of water it pumps from the currently estimated 28,000 acre-feet a year. The recharge rate of the basin is estimated at 7,650 acre-feet a year, with most of the water coming from the local mountain watersheds.

According to the draft intro for the sustainability plan, “In general, the IWVGA sustainability goal is to manage the IWVGB within its sustainable yield such that undesirable results do not occur over the planning and implementation horizon (the 50-year time period over which the IWVGA determines that plans and measures will be implemented to ensure the basin is operated within its sustainable yield).”

This will ultimately include the use of imported water from outside the basin, as well as the possibility of treated brackish water from inside the basin, as well as recycled water. The IWVGA has contracted with Capital Core Group to assess the state’s water market and evaluate the best measures.

Different modeling scenarios have projected different outcomes. The most current modeling scenario includes assigning a “block” of water to non-domestic groups like agriculture and Searles Valley Minerals. Water from that block would be divided up — and once they run through that amount, they will have to stop pumping or find alternative sources of water.

Agricultural interests and Searles Valley Minerals take the modeling scenarios seriously and have been vocal about it.

Attorneys for both Searles Valley Minerals and Meadowbrook Dairy, one of the valley’s largest ag operations, have sent letters to the IWVGA objecting to “a block” of water.

Searles Valley Minerals noted that it has rights to water in the basin that predates and supersedes the Navy’s rights before the establishment of China Lake in 1943. It has also noted that without a continued source of water, it will go out of business. On top of that, SVM acts as the main water supplier to Searles Valley Domestic Water Company, Trona’s water utility.

Meadowbrook has asked for a permanent annual allocation, noting its own presence in the valley contributes to the economy, as do other agricultural enterprises.

The law governing the IWVGAs management of the basin is the Groundwater Sustainability Act of 2014, signed into law by then-Gov. Jerry Brown as a signature act at the height of a years-long drought.

One of the criteria for SGMA was to bring all critically overdrafted basins into a sustainable management system and prevent future crises, especially for communities whose sole source of water came from the ground.

The options were straightforward: Have local groundwater sustainability agencies do it and have the state come in with what would be promised to be more draconian measures in terms of how to administer fees, fines and regulations.

Now in its fifth year, the groundwater authority faces a tight timeline as it develops modeling scenarios to chart how potential strategies would impact the basin in the longterm. While not an actual

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plan, the most useful data will play a part in the final development.

As part of the plan’s development, the IWVGA has already instituted a mandatory well registration on all wells. The first version was adopted in the summer of 2018 on large pumpers, such as farms, the Indian Wells Valley Water District and Searles Valley Minerals in Trona, which pumps water from wells it owns in the IWV.

Those large owners were also assessed a monthly fee of $30 per acre-foot pumped to help bridge a $930,000 budget shortfall in the development of the sustainability plan.

The second version of the mandatory well registration ordinance was adopted in August 2019, applying to all wells in the basin. However, de minimis users (well owners who pump two acre-feet or less a year for domestic purposes only) don’t pay.

That will likely change as the sustainability plan is adopted and submitted to DWR for approval. In the interim, the plan will be in effect, allowing the IWVGA to implement fees and assessments to pay for the administration of the basin.

Much of the plan is being paid for through a state grant under Proposition 1. The crux is that the plan is reimbursable, meaning the Groundwater Authority pays for everything upfront. Cashflow has been an issue in the past for the groundwater authority.

Initially funded by seed money from the state and $15,000 in contributions from each of the five members, the groundwater authority has been advanced $500,000 each from the IWV Water District and the Kern County Board of Supervisors.

The water district will likely seek reimbursement through a credit on any future fees or assessments implemented by the Groundwater Authority, while Kern County will recoup its investment in direct reimbursement from the Prop. 1 grant, allowing the agency to pay bills. A second reimbursement is expected later this year.

Imported water will be a major factor in the basin’s management over the next few decades. However, cost and the source of that water is still uncertain.

“Without imported water, we will have to cut back production to avoid significant overdraft, but if we cut back below the safe yield, it will have devastating impacts on this community,” said Stetson Engineers president Steve Johnson at an August board meeting.

The two most likely solutions will be expensive — and likely controversial. One option is an estimated $55 million project to take advantage of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s iconic LA Aqueduct, which transports water from the Owens Valley to the nation’s second-largest city.

While it is the logical decision given its proximity to the Indian Wells Valley, it could also spark controversy with Inyo County and Owens Valley residents, many of whom had long harbored a grudge against LA for allegedly stealing water and creating an environmental nightmare in the Owens Dry Lake, which LADWP must help mitigate as part of settlement.

John Vallejo, Inyo County’s representative on the IWVGA board, has warned about this in the past.

“LADWP already imports a significant amount of water as it is and to expect LA would enter into the first place wishful thinking,” Vallejo said at an August board meeting. “To think that the communities of Inyo County would be interested in allowing that to happen would also be wishful thinking. I think we would be doing our constituents a disservice if we solely focused on water involving LADWP and the water they take from Owens Valley.”

The other option: a $177 million project to hook up to the Antelope Valley East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) pipeline in California City. Beyond the princely sum, the groundwater authority would also have to pay for the treatment of the water.

IWVGA board member Ron Kicinski, who chairs the board for 2019 and represents the IWV Water District, has noted the impracticality of the AVEK option.

“Let’s keep in mind the size of our community at a conservative 30,000 residents,” Kicinski said at an August meeting. “It’s a cost versus population when talking about bringing in water. It just isn’t going to work. We have to look at the most economical way to do it.”

Kern County Supervisor Mick Gleason, representing his county on the board, and one of the IWVGA’s original board members, has consistently stressed that the groundwater is here to stay. He has also noted the groundwater sustainability plan will evolve over time as more information is developed and policies put in place.

“Technology changes, there are environmental changes, cultural changes that will constantly adapt and we need to stay in step with that,” Gleason said in August. He added getting the plan out to the state is just the first step.

“All I want to do is get to first base, I’m not interested in a home run,” he said.
Museums in Ridgecrest: A triple dose of education and fun

Ridgecrest is home to three museums that chronicle the history of the Indian Wells Valley and surrounding areas.

The Maturango Museum
100 E. Las Flores Avenue, open seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (expect major holidays)
The Maturango was founded in 1962 and serves as an important educational and cultural resource for the valley. The Maturango Museum hosts gallery exhibits and a natural history exhibit of the various animal and plant life in the valley.
The museum is also famous for its spring and fall petroglyph tours of the Coso petroglyphs aboard Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake (available only to U.S. citizens per U.S. Navy policy).
The museum also hosts several concerts throughout the year in its gallery space and is the sponsor and organizer for the annual Open Studio Tour, traditionally held every October. The tour allows the valley's talented artists to open up their spaces and see art work.
The museum also hosts monthly free days on the second Saturday of the month, where the $5 admission is waived one day out the month. Museum members are allowed in free any day of the month. There is no charge for anyone under age 18 or for active duty military.
During the fall and spring, the Maturango hosts a Children's Hour on a Friday for pre-school aged children that includes a story time and activities based on the local natural or cultural resources of the Mojave Desert.
The Maturango also hosts field trips to area locations, guest lectures by prominent artists and conservationists.

China Lake Museum
130 E Las Flores Ave, Ridgecrest, California.
Open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed on select holidays)
The China Lake Museum, officially known as the The Naval Museum of Armament & Technology, is hard to miss from its new location on East Las Flores Avenue. Located next door to the Maturango Museum, the museum's front yard sports a few aircraft repurposed for display and a big honking bomb that is part of China Lake's developmental history.
The museum preserves and interprets the history of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and its heritage of advancing Naval aviation armament and technology. This museum is the repository of artifacts, photographs and film, documents and related heritage memorabilia from China Lake.
The foundation that currently runs it was established in 1993 to support the establishment and and management of the museum.
According to its website, "the CLMP goal is to create a self sustaining, historical, educational, entertaining museum that shares the history of China Lake and its role in development of Naval Armament and Technology with Navy personnel, their contractors, and the public, and to nurture curiosity in science and technology to youth through its rocket scientist program and other science programs."
For most of its history, the museum was housed in the old Officer's Club aboard NAW's China Lake, where it held hundreds of displays including weapons systems developed and tested at China Lake over the installation's 76-year history.
The museum relocated to its new facility in 2017 after years of planning and fundraising, in large part thanks to a grant secured by the museum foundation's current board president Laura Hickle. While the smaller location means the museum can only house a portion of the exhibits, the public has more access to the history of China Lake, something that could be a barrier due to China Lake's access.
The museum is also planning future expansion at its new site as funding becomes available.
General admission to the museum is $5, $3 for seniors 62 years and older, children ages 10-17 and veterans, and free for active duty military and military families with the proper ID.

Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert

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Who We Are 2019

230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd., Ridgecrest, California.

The Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert is housed in Ridgecrest’s iconic building, the Historic USO Building. It houses a large repository of archives, fitting as it served as one of the community’s first civic buildings, having housed council meetings.

The Historical Society acts as more than just a storehouse for exhibits and bits of history obtained over the decades about Ridgecrest’s past — it’s also a place to gather for Open Mic Nights, classic movie showings, monthly lectures and monthly veterans breakfasts and stress support group.

In the past few years, the Historical Society has also expanded beyond the Historic USO Building. The Historical Society also acquired a historic one-room schoolhouse that was built in 1905, restored it to its original configuration, and opened the region’s only Veterans Memorial Building. Buildings under the stewardship of HSUMD include the Historic USO Building, the Original Kern County Jail, the Original Kern County Firehouse, and two Original Engine Houses.

According to its mission statement, “As a historical society, our main mission is to find, store, preserve, protect, exhibit, and educate the public about historical artifacts and materials related to the history of our region. The Society also has a mission to write and publish books and other materials that reveal our region’s history. And the Society has a mission to restore, operate, and display a collection of historic buildings that represent the civic origins of the city of Ridgecrest.”

Its veterans breakfasts are sponsored by local businesses and community members and are free to veterans and their spouses on the third Thursday of the month.

Its classic movie nights are free of charge (donation requested) while its Open Mic Nights, held on non-flex Fridays (Fridays where China Lake employees work), are only $2 admission and offer some great pastimes for music lovers or for local musicians and performers to show off their talent.

The Historic USO Building is also a popular place to host local events, with the Historic Society leasing it for everything from dinners to celebrations of life.
Miners to bikers: The evolution of Randsburg

By Jessica Weston

The town of Randsburg got its start because of gold. The precious metal was discovered on the slope of Rand Mountain in 1895. The town of Randsburg sprang up quickly after that. Within four years the town boasted over 3,500 residents. Conservative estimates put the amount of gold pulled from the mines as $60 million during its heyday.

Nowadays, Randsburg brings in more money from tourism than from mining.

Much of the architecture from Randsburg’s historic past is still there — making it a perfect place for a history-seeking day trip. The Jail, the White House Saloon, the Old Barber Shop, the Opera House and other scenic locations hearken to the region’s fascinating past.

Down from its boom-time population of over 3,000, Randsburg is now home to approximately 80 people in the town itself and over 3,000, Randsburg is now home to approximately 80 people in the town itself and an additional 450 if you include residents of Johannesburg and Red Mountain. The town now includes its downtown area, the Desert Rand Museum, various shops, County Park, the uptown area and its shops, Santa Barbara Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, Consolidated Mill and Big Butte Mine.

Most of these locales are open to the public. Those who are wanting to visit the mines are out of luck, however. All of the mines are on private property and trespassing is not allowed. They can be viewed from a distance, though.

Randsburg is a haven for history-seeking wild west enthusiasts all year long, but a special event is dedicated to commemorating the wild west enthusiasts all year long, but a special event.

The Rand Desert Museum every year sponsors Old West Day. This popular event kicks off with an all you can eat Pancake Breakfast at the Opera House for a $10 suggested donation — a fundraiser for the museum. It then combines a street fair with country and western and bluegrass bands with food booths, antiques, collectibles and other vendors for a thorough old west immersion experience. Old West Day is held the third Saturday in September.

The Rand Desert Museum itself, meanwhile, offers a look at the area’s fascinating history. The museum shares the historic cultural resources and architectural history of the Rand Mining District as well as covering the history of Johannesburg, Red Mountain, Atolia, Garlock, Saltdale and Cantil. The museum also has exhibits and information about Burro Schmidt’s Tunnel, Red Rock Canyon, Ballarat, Skidoo, the Searles Lake Pinnacles and other notable local spots. The museum is open every weekend from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

A must for visitors to Randsburg is the town’s historic General Store. The store was established in 1896, one year before the town of Randsburg itself was founded in 1897. These days the General Store is known for its hearty breakfasts and lunches, as well as carrying groceries, deli, dairy, canned goods, bird seed, dry goods and sundries, books, maps, posters, cards, gifts, camping equipment, antiques, collectibles, household goods, automobile and motorcycle supplies and apparel including baby items.

The store is located at 35 Butte Avenue and open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Call 760-374-2143 for more information.

Randsburg is a destination/turnaround for Harley riders out of the LA area, as well as European tourists. In addition to hosting history buffs, the town also provides amenities for off-road enthusiasts. The area is surrounded by off-road trails popular with riders of quads and off-road motorcyclists.

The Randsburg area has also been the scene of many movie, TV and commercial productions. Movies filmed in the general area include Hidalgo, which was filmed in the desert south of Red Mountain; Nevada starring Kirstie Alley; the Brave directed by and starring Johnny Depp (released overseas only) and of course the classic Trona horror satire Chopper Chicks in Zombie Town starring Billy Bob Thornton.

One destination popular with tourists, bikers and movie people alike is Randsburg’s legendary bar The Joint. The bar staff is happy to serve up drinks along with stories about famous folk who overindulged after shooting on location nearby. The Joint is located at 165 Butte Avenue. Call 760-608-9421 for more information.
The rodeo has been a part of Kern County, specifically the Ridgecrest and Kern River Valley regions, for generations. Before the rodeo made its way into Kern County, the rodeo in Southern California first came to be in 1924 at Sherwood Park, with the California Rodeo was incorporated a year later. In the 1930s the CR started including bull riding into their events, something that is still seen at rodeo events to this day. In the Ridgecrest area, the Rodeo Arena opened in 1946 in the town of Inyokern, located behind what is now the Chevron Station on Inyokern road, marking the first rodeo brought to the Indian Wells Valley. After failing to do well, the rodeo was closed. But the Desert Empire Fairgrounds revived the rodeo in 1980 and has held rodeo events every year until its more recent closure. Hap Ross, with the help of others, started the Ridgecrest Rodeo Association in 1990, according to High-Desert-Memories.net. Ross became a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association committee member in order to promote the rodeo in IWV. The rodeo had become a central part of the community as well. “The Ridgecrest Rodeo Association was responsible for the estab-

Continued on Page 30
Due to the outstanding[ly] high level of community involvement and enthusiasm, the annual Stampede Days Rodeo has been held consistently throughout the year, with next year marking the 35th anniversary of the event. The rodeo is a significant part of the community’s celebrations, with other festivities such as bull poker, ring of fire, as well as bull riding & bullfighting with the added excitement of new events - bull poker, ring of fire, and training for Reserve Deputies.

The Kern County Fair also hosts rodeo festivities throughout each day of the event, which has a lot to offer, including a women’s barrel race. The rodeo's funds go towards equipment and training for Reserve Deputies.

The Kern County website describes the rodeo as “Not your grandfather's rodeo.” The rodeo uses the historic Buck Owens' Rodeo days until 1985 when the Kern County Sheriff's Reserve Association took over and renamed it. The rodeo’s funds go towards equipment and training for Reserve Deputies.

The Kern County website describes the event as “Featuring fan-favorite events such as bull riding & bullfighting with the added flair of new events - bull poker, ring of fire, and training for Reserve Deputies.” The rodeo crowd and leave fans screaming for more.

The following two days are dedicated to the PRCA Rodeo, which includes cowboys and cowgirls participating in six events, as well as the women’s barrel race.

The last day of festivities includes a Mexican style rodeo, including Charros. The show includes bull riding, bullfighting, bronc riding and more. Kernville also hosts their yearly Whiskey Flats event over President's Day weekend, which also highlights the rodeo and similar events.

“Whiskey Flat Wild West Daze Rodeo is held during the leap back to the good ol’ wild west days when the area was settled by gold miners, cattle ranchers and trappers,” the Kernville website reads.

Women’s Center-High Desert, Inc. is a non-profit organization providing a network of services relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse for Eastern Kern and surrounding counties. The Women’s Center offers:

- Domestic Violence Emergency shelter for men and women with or without children
- Domestic Violence Restraining Orders
- SART – Sexual Assault Response Team
- Counseling
- Community Education
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Kern Coalition Against Human Trafficking (KCANT)

Women's Center-High Desert, Inc. has four locations in Eastern Kern County: Ridgecrest, Tehachapi, Lake Isabella, and Mojave. For more information, visit www.loscarcc-lhc.com or call 760-375-6290 or 760-375-7525.
T he City of California City was built on speculation by developers hoping to create a city to rival Palm Springs. While those dreams did not materialize, the city is now speculating on the burgeoning marijuana industry to bring some much needed growth to the region.

In October 2015, the Governor of California signed the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act into law. In June 2016, the California City Council directed the City Manager and the City Attorney’s office to research, and to provide recommendations regarding the establishment of regulations for cultivating, manufacturing, selling, and testing of medical marijuana or cannabis. With a land mass of more than 200 square miles, California City seemed ripe for the business.

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. 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 (Municipal Code), or that otherwise exist. The Municipal Code provides 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 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
- $3 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

The initial annual proceeds from the CBT will be approximately $3.4 million per year. Actual proceeds will vary depending on the number, size, and gross receipts of Cannabis Businesses.

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.

“Driven Deliveries Inc., doing business in California City as California City Supply LLC with local partners Amanda Adolf and Rick Jones, was the top ranked applicant,” Hayek said.

Driven Deliveries is a publicly traded company under the stock symbol DRVD. As its name implies, the business will literally also be driving business to the city. Hayek attended the meeting along with Adolf, Jones and Driven Chief Executive Officer Chris Boudreau.

“The storefront will be for residents of California City and then we’ll also be providing next day delivery will be northern Los Angeles and up to the Bakersfield area,” said Hayek. “Our goal is to really create a fulfillment center for the entire central valley basin down to Los Angeles.”

Access to needed infrastructure, in the form of electricity and water, has slowed the opening of the first businesses. To help alleviate some of the problems, the city has permitted temporary wells to be drilled while the businesses wait for connection to city water supplies.

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WHO WE ARE 2019 31
A unique feature for the City of Rosamond is the Rosamond Skypark. The Rosamond Skypark is a privately-owned and operated residential skypark which is also open for public use. In 1966, Bill Aronson bought the Rosamond Airport along with two partners. At that time, Runway 07-25 was a 2,600-foot-long dirt strip. The airport also had an 1,800-foot diagonal dirt strip, a house, and two old wood-frame military buildings that were used as utility buildings and movie props. During 1967 Aronson paved the runway and 1,500 feet of taxiway with desert mix and added runway lights and built a hangar.

The airport was established as fixed-base operator airport and initially included a certified radio shop, FAA certified flying school, which included sail plane, commercial, and flight instructor ratings. Aronson ran the airport from 1967 to 1994 while living in an old house on the airport property.

Permits to transform it into a skypark were finally obtained in 1985. The development and construction right were sold, while Aronson and his partners retained the rights to the 7-acre FBO property itself. Touted as “a luxury fly-in community” in sales brochures, several floor plans were offered for the homes with three different sizes of hangars.

By the end of 1986 nearly a dozen homes in the skypark were occupied with others under construction. Slow sales and the Savings and Loan crisis brought most development to a halt by the end of the 1980s. In 1995, an investment company bought the remaining undeveloped properties and in 1997 the FBO property was purchased by Aero Sports Skypark Corporation.

By 2007, some 50 homes were either occupied or under construction. The real estate bubble during the 2007-2009 years saw little building progress.

More recently, the gradually improving economy has been paced by a few lot sales and new starts. As of 2018 only seven of the project’s 60 residential lots remain undeveloped.

Unlike many residential airport developments where the airport itself is owned either by a government entity or a private individual, the Rosamond Skypark’s airport is owned outright by the residents. The Skypark is a Common Interest Subdivision, comprised of 60 privately-owned residential lots and three commercial lots (an FBO lot, a restaurant and a currently undeveloped commercially-zoned lot).

Ownership of a lot brings membership in a homeowner’s association, the Rosamond Skypark Association, through which each lot has a 1/63rd undivided interest in the common area, which is the airport proper — the runway and taxiway environment. The Association administers the operation of the airport itself, working through an elected five-member Board of Directors. The Board is assisted by various committees.

As a Common Interest Subdivision, or Planned Unit Development, the Skypark lots are covered by Codes Covenants and Restrictions, which provide the legal framework allowing the Association to both operate the airport and exercise a certain level of control over the use of the individual lot properties.
Kern River Valley

It's called Ridgecrest's backyard playground. With the number of visitors from Ridgecrest and other East Kern community visitors, that could well be true.

Located about an hour from Ridgecrest, nestled in the Sierra mountain range, one finds Isabella Lake, the recreation foundation of the Kern River Valley.

The lake is well known for its exceptional fishing with trout, crappie, bluegill and various species of bass.

But fun on the water is not limited to fishing. The lake is also a partner with water skiers, boating in general, jet skis, parasailing and wind surfing. This body of water offers it all.

However, it is not just this body of water that lures visitors to the Kern River Valley.

KRY is also home to whitewater rafting, river tubing, kayaking and of course fishing on the expansive Wild and Scenic Kern River.

The river originates in the Mt. Whitney watershed and winds down the mountain through the Southern Sierra Nevada mountain range and to Isabella Lake.

Other recreational opportunities include camping, horseback riding, rock climbing, hunting, sport shooting, gold panning, star gazing, birding (over 200 species can be counted along the South Fork of the Kern River and the Kern River Preserve).

If it's hiking or mountain biking, visitors can partake in that, too. Above Wofford Heights is Shirley Meadows and Alta Sierra on the Greenhorn Mountain range, which features snow skiing, cross country skiing and snowboarding.

Kern River Valley also offers several interesting spots to visit.

On your list should be Silver City Ghost Town in Bodfish; Pearl Harbor Memorial in Lake Isabella, Kern Valley Museum in Kernville, the Fish Hatchery up river, Bullfrog, Kernville; Nunn Canyon Native American Cultural Center on Highway 155 just past the main dam, and the quaint town of Kernville with many shops around Circle Park.

Traveling “up river” from Kernville head to historic McNally’s and the Kern River Valley also offers several interesting spots to visit.

Above Wofford Heights is Shirley Meadows and Alta Sierra on the Greenhorn Mountain range, which features snow skiing, cross country skiing and snowboarding.

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What is now the Mojave Air and Space Port has nearly always been on the cutting edge of aviation. Besides being a general-use public airport, Mojave has three main areas of activity: flight testing, space industry development, and aircraft heavy maintenance and storage.

Originally opened in 1935 to serve the gold and silver mining industry, it was comprised of two dirt runways, with no fueling or servicing facilities.

In 1941 the Civil Aeronautics Board began improvements to the airport for national defense purposes that included two asphalt runways.

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ways and a taxiway.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States Marine Corps took over the airport and expanded it into Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Station Mojave. The two runways were extended and a third one added. barracks were constructed to house 2,794 male and 376 female military personnel. Civilian employment at the base would peak at 176.

Many of the Corps' World War II aces received their gunnery training at Mojave. During World War II, Mojave hosted 29 aircraft squadrons, four Carrier Aircraft Service Detachments, and three Air Warning Squadrongs. At its peak, the air station had 145 training and other aircraft. Mojave also had a 75 x 156 foot swimming pool that was used to train aviators in emergency water egress and for recreation.

With the end of World War II, MCAAS was disestablished on February 7, 1946; a United States Navy Air Station was established the same day. The Navy used the airport for drone operations for less than a year, closing it on Jan. 1, 1947. The base remained closed for four years until the outbreak of the Korean War. Mojave was reactivated as an auxiliary landing field to MCAS El Toro.

The airport was recommissioned as a MCAAS on December 31, 1953. Squadrons used Mojave for ordnance training when El Toro had bad weather. Marine Corps reserve units were temporarily deployed to Mojave for two-week periods.

In 1961, after the Marine Corps transferred operations to MCAS El Centro, Kern County obtained title to the airport. In February 1972, the East Kern Airport District was formed to administer the airport.

On Nov. 20, 2012, the EKAD Board of Directors voted to change the name of the district to the Mojave Air and Space Port. Officials said that the spaceport name is well known around the world, but EKAD is not. The change took effect on Jan. 1, 2013.

Flight testing activities have been centered at Mojave since the early 1970s. It is also favored for this purpose due to its proximity to Edwards Air Force Base, where the airspace is restricted from ground level to an unlimited height, and where there is a supersonic corridor. Mojave is also the home of the National Test Pilot School, Scaled Composites and Virgin Galactic/The Spaceship Company.

Beginning with the Rotary Rocket program, Mojave became a focus for small companies seeking a place to develop space access technologies. Mojave Spaceport has been a test site for several teams in the Ansari X Prize, most notably the Scale Composites SpaceShipOne, which conducted the first privately funded human sub-orbital flight on June 21, 2004. Other groups based at the Mojave Spaceport include XCOR Aerospace, Masten Space Systems, Virgin Galactic, The Spaceship Company, Stratolaunch Systems, and Firestar Technologies. Other companies at Mojave include Orbital Sciences Corporation, NASA and Interorbital Systems.

The Mojave airport is also known as a storage location for commercial airliners, due to the vast area and dry desert conditions. Numerous Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed, and Airbus jetliners including wide-body aircraft previously or currently owned by major domestic and international airlines are stored at Mojave. Some aircraft reach the end of their useful lifetime and are scrapped at the Mojave airport boneyard, while others are refurbished and returned to active service.

The airport refurbished an old United States Marine Corps hangar from the World War II era into a modern event center. During World War II, Mojave hosted 29 aircraft squadrons, four Carrier Aircraft Service Detachments, and three Air Warning Squadrongs. At its peak, the air station had 145 training and other aircraft. Mojave also had a 75 x 156 foot swimming pool that was used to train aviators in emergency water egress and for recreation.

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The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is associated with, well, Los Angeles, but it nonetheless has a huge impact on the Owens Valley.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct was built in 1913. Since that time it has not only helped create the city of Los Angeles, it has also helped preserve the Owens Valley in its natural state. LADWP manages land uses and natural resources throughout the Owens Valley.

According to LADWP, they began purchasing Owens River watershed lands in 1905. They now own 314,000 acres in the Owens Valley, 80 percent of which is leased. The United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are the majority land-owners in the Eastern Sierra, but LADWP is the largest private landowner in the Owens Valley watershed.

The interaction between the city of Los Angeles and the Owens Valley continues to shape the region. According to LADWP, the city’s long-standing land use policies make sure that at least 75 percent of leased lands are open to the public for recreational use.

LADWP land uses in the Owens Valley include the Lone Pine Sports Complex — a collaboration between the Lone Pine community and LADWP; Mendenhall Park in Big Pine; the City Park and Izaak Walton Park in Bishop and Dehy Park in Independence. Inyo County also leases land from LADWP for the Millipond Recreation Area, which is a county park north of Bishop. LADWP also leases land to Inyo and Mono counties for various campground sites. Recreation spots Crowley Lake, Pleasant Valley Reservoir and Grand Lake were created by LADWP for water storage.

LADWP leases hundreds of thousands of acres of ranch land for growing crops and raising livestock and provides property to the State of California for regional fisheries. These include Fish Springs, the Hot Creek and Blackrock Fish Hatcheries; the Owens Valley Native Fish Sanctuary at Fish Slough and the University of California Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory.

In a large project, LADWP and contractors are installing one of the largest shallow flooding systems in the world to reduce dust on Owens Lake, with the ultimate goal of improving air quality around the area. According to LADWP, the system consists of a network of computer-controlled sprinklers on more than 14 square miles of the lakebed. The system will have over 60 miles of pipelines and over 2,000 miles of buried drip irrigation lines.

Another project involves a five-year effort to revegetate abandoned agricultural land with native plants. This was just completed, with plots in Independence, Big Pine, Bishop and Laws planted with native grasses and shrubs. According to LADWP, with dry land revegetation methods supplemental irrigation water is not used. A goal of the pilot project is for the native plants to sprout and survive with rainfall as the sole source of water.

In another revegetation project in Bishop, LADWP researchers are studying ways to capture small amounts of moisture and direct it to adjacent vegetation. This project uses ancient irrigation techniques similar to those practiced in the Owens Valley by Native Americans in the past.

This astronaut photograph highlights the mostly dry bed of Owens Lake, located in the Owens River Valley between the Inyo Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Shallow groundwater, springs, and seeps support minor wetlands and a central brine pool. Two bright red areas along the margins of the brine pool indicate the presence of halophilic (salt-loving) organisms known as archaeans. Gray and white materials within the lake bed are exposed sediments and salt crusts. The nearby towns of Olancha and Lone Pine are marked by the presence of green vegetation, indicating a more constant availability of water.

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History and westerns: Checking out Lone Pine

By Jessica Weston

The town of Lone Pine has a wealth of history that belies its tiny size. The Owens Valley was originally inhabited by the Paiute people and the Lone Pine area developed a modern settlement in the 1860s. The first Lone Pine post office opened in 1870. The Lone Pine Indian Reservation remains home to tribal members of the Paiute-Shoshone Indians.

The tiny town of Lone Pine was literally named after a single pine tree. During the 1870s it became a supply hub for nearby mining communities such as Kearsarge, Cerro Gordo, Keeler, Swansea and Darwin.

Now Lone Pine is known for other things, ranging from the being the world’s foremost location for filming western movies to acting the gateway to the tourist destinations of Mt. Whitney and Death Valley—as well as the near neighbor of the historically significant site of Manzanar.

The small town is also home to the Courtyard Art Gallery and a destination spot for rustic activities ranging from biking, birding, fishing, golf, hang-gliding, hiking, horseback riding, mountaineering and rock climbing.

Westerns in the Alabama Hills

The film industry played a key role in the development of the area. The first film shot in the area was the silent movie The Roundup in 1920. The location proved perfect for conveying a western frontier on film, and since then over 400 films, 100 television episodes and many commercials have been shot in and around Lone Pine and the Alabama Hills.

Films shot in the area comprise a virtual history of Hollywood westerns. A partial list includes Riders of the Purple Sage with Tom Mix in 1925; Blue Steel with John Wayne in 1934; Hop-Along Cassidy with William Boyd in 1935; The Charge of the Light Brigade with Errol Flynn in 1936; Oh, Susanna! with Gene Autry in 1936; Rhythm on the Range with Bing Crosby in 1936; The Cowboy and the Lady with Gary Cooper in 1938, Under Western Stars with Roy Rogers in 1938; Gunga Din with Cary Grant in 1939; Raoul Walsh’s High Sierra starring Humphrey Bogart in 1941; West of the Pecos with Robert

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Mitchum in 1949; The Gunfighter with Gregory Peck in 1950; Bad Day at Black Rock with Spencer Tracy in 1955; Hell Bent for Leather with Audie Murphy in 1960; How the West Was Won with James Stewart in 1962; Nevada Smith with Steve McQueen in 1966; Joe Kidd with Clint Eastwood in 1972; and The Lone Ranger with Johnny Depp in 2013.


The Museum of Western Film History in Lone Pine pays tribute to this history. Founded in 2006, The Museum of Western Film History is the only museum devoted to chronicling western film history and its impact on American culture and contains what is surely the world's largest collection of western film memorabilia. The museum also features exhibits and information on other films shot in the area, ranging from science fiction to comedies.

The annual three-day Lone Pine Film Festival is a widely popular event that attracts movie fans from the world over, some in western garb. The festival features screenings, panels, western authors and geographical movie site tours featuring the landscape of the Alabama Hills and the Eastern Sierra.

Over the years, the festival has featured tributes to John Wayne, Gene Autry, Hopalong Cassidy, Tim Holt and the Lone Ranger. It is held each Columbus Day weekend. This year's film festival will take place on October 10 to 13.

See www.museumofwesternfilmhistory.org for more information.

Manzanar
Close to Lone Pine is the Manzanar National Historic Site, which is a U.S. National Historic Site under the auspices of the United States National Park Service. Manzanar was the site of an American internment camp for Japanese Americans during World War II. Manzanar was one of 10 camps in which Japanese-Americans were interned during World War II — in what many consider a shameful episode in U.S. History. Manzanar remains open to the public and is the site of an annual pilgrimage, which is an important historic event to many.

Fishing
The Lone Pine area is known for fishing, billing itself as Golden Trout Headquarters. Anyone interested in a Certificate for catching a Golden Trout is asked to contact the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce at 760-876-4444 or email info@lonepinechamber.org.

Lone Pine's trout season opens approximately two months earlier than anywhere else in the Eastern Sierra. It kicks off with the Early Opener Trout Derby the first Saturday in March.

Local fishing spots include Independence Creek, Symmes Creek, Sheperd Creek, George Creek, Whitney Portal Pond, Lone Pine Creek, Lone Pine Sand Trap, Turtle Creek, Diziz Lake and Cottonwood Creek.

Cottonwood Lakes has the following special regulations. It is catch and release at Cottonwood Lakes 1, 2, 3, and 4. All other lakes in the Cottonwood Lakes Basin are restricted to artificial lures or flies with barbless hooks, with a limit of 5. The season is July 1 – October 31.

Western Gateway to Death Valley National Park

Manzanar National Historic Site is situated near the town of Lone Pine.
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“I’ve worked with Kevin for years and can tell you that day in and day out he is fighting for Kern County and our way of life. We’re lucky to have him as our representative and leader in Congress.”

Vince Fong, State Assemblyman