

Endorsed by:

Homestead Valley Community Council
www.hvccsite.org

Morongo Basin Historical Society
www.mbhs.org

Flamingo Heights
Community Association
www.fhca.com

Johnson Valley
Improvement Association
see www.johnsonvalley.com

Hammerking Productions
dave@kingofthehammers.com

Landers Association

Yucca Mesa
Improvement Association
www.yuccamesa.org

Western American Railroad Museum
www.barstowrailmuseum.org

Lucerne Valley
Chamber of Commerce

Lucerne Valley
Economic Development Association

Lucerne Valley Market & Hardware

Lucerne Valley Museum

Route 66 Mother Road Museum
www.route66museum.org

Joshua Tree
Gateway Communities
Tourism Committee
www.joshuatreegatewaycommunities.com

Points of Interest Promotions
Lucerne Valley
billlembright@thenewlight.net

Rockhound Field Trip Fanatics!
<http://rockhound-field-trips.ning.com>

Morongo Basin
Conservation Association
www.mbconservation.org

Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley
Municipal Advisory Council

Barstow Chamber of Commerce
www.barstowchamber.com

Morongo Basin
Municipal Advisory Council

Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre
Mayor, City of Barstow

247 Intent/Outreach Documents

Contents: digital documents illustrating public outreach

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SCENIC 247 COMMITTEE •

51720 Hacienda Rd.#247, Johnson Valley, CA 92285 • www.scenichighway247.com
A committee of the Homestead Valley Community Council



Public Outreach Timeline

This timeline tells the history of the Scenic 247 Committee actions during its campaign for State Scenic Highway status for State Route 247. Each listed item occurred in a public meeting, or became public knowledge in meetings, by e-mail, newsletters, or posted on websites. A growing number of positive comments and correspondence from locals, tourism advocates, conservationist groups, bloggers, and news media, attested to the popularity of the Scenic 247 idea in the communities on SR 247 and beyond.

Word-of-mouth and the ripple of electronic public outreach mostly occurred as a side effect of its mission, not planned promotional efforts by the Scenic Committee.

2009

The Homestead Valley Community Council, a coalition of community organizations representing the unincorporated communities of Yucca Mesa, Flamingo Heights, Landers, and Johnson Valley addresses common concerns to local, County, State, and Federal officials. (SR 247 connects these communities founded by homesteaders in the 1950's.)

Betty Munson, a delegate from Johnson Valley, proposed to the Council the idea of seeking a State Scenic Highway designation for this historic route through largely undeveloped vistas in the high desert of Southern California.

Munson had advice from several sources, including:

- Alan Rasmussen, Field Representative for Third District Supervisor Neil Derry
- Ray Desselle, Landscape Architect for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Tom Hudson in County Land Use Services, a veteran of the establishment of the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail
- James Conkle, Chairman of the Route 66 Preservation Foundation
- Joseph Ross, MCAGCC 29 Palms Community Engagement (who read of the campaign and volunteered research and historical items.)

2009 through 2020

June 15, 2009:

HVCC formed a Community Improvement Committee to pursue such projects as the designation of SR247 as a scenic or historic highway.

Since then, HVCC monthly public meetings have 1) agendaized Scenic 247 and discussed it in-depth, or 2) updated progress or non-progress of the proposal. All meeting minutes are posted on www.hvccsite.org. The venue of these meetings rotates among the member communities of Yucca Mesa, Flamingo Heights, Landers and Johnson Valley. Meetings and developments about Scenic Highway status have been reported on Z1077.7 radio and in newspapers.

The Committee soon abandoned the idea of a “historic highway” designation for two reasons:

- 1) the federal paperwork involved was beyond our volunteers’ capabilities, time and resources.
- 2) Caltrans, decades before, had designated SR247 as “eligible for scenic highway” status. They assured us that County Scenic Byway and Bureau of Land Management corridor regulations already in effect would stay in place for a State Scenic Highway corridor management. Typical scenic difficulties, such as removal of billboards, did not exist.

Work began, assembling photographs and facts to present to the County.

2011

January 19, 2011:

HVCC established the ad hoc Scenic 247 Committee. Public reports drew several volunteers to help.

Members at that time:

- Barbara Harris, Yucca Valley resident, historian and graphic designer/photographer, desert tour guide
- Betty Munson, president Johnson Valley Improvement Association (JVIA), retired graphic designer/copywriter
- Jim Harvey, Johnson Valley resident, HVCC president, website designer, later president of the Lucerne Valley Unified School District (LVUSD) Board of Trustees
- Joanna Wright, then vice president, later president,

of the JVIA, delegate to HVCC

- Phillip Brown, Yucca Valley resident, historian, contractor, realtor, photographer

Members recruited as time went by:

- Sarah Kennington, Pioneertown resident, Morongo Basin Conservation Association (MBCA) president
- Sara Fairchild, Pioneertown resident, licensed Landscape Architect
- Chuck Bell, president Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association (LVEDA)

2011-2013

The Committee began with public outreach. Members paid for printed letters and brochures.

Harris, Munson and Wright, at their own expense, began field trips to sign on sponsors for the proposal, not asking for money, just endorsements. Initial efforts turned mostly to photos and destinations of interest to tourists in the Barstow area. Harris also concentrated on the Yucca Valley end of the highway.

Early enthusiastic support came from the Route 66 Mother Road Museum and the Western America Railroad Museum, both located in the Casa del Desierto Railroad Station (now Harvey House) in Barstow. Mojave River Valley Museum associates volunteered help.

Barstow sponsors, always tourism-conscious, got it. They appreciated the emphasis on 247 as the lone highway artery connecting Route 66 travelers to roads leading to other world-renowned destinations.

Lucerne Valley Desert Crossroads at the middle of SR247 route, links:

- SR247 northbound to the I-15 and Route 66 in Barstow, east- and southbound to Yucca Valley)
- SR 18 (southbound to Big Bear and other mountain destinations; westbound to I-15 at Victorville)
- SR 62 in Yucca Valley (which connects Joshua Tree National Park to the I-10 and Palm Springs)

January 2012:

Betty Munson began research, layout and copy for a Scenic 247 presentation, to be a print brochure and a PowerPoint. Direct quotations from the Caltrans Landscape Architecture Program formed its basis, to argue how and why the time had come for the Scenic designation.

Harris, Munson, and Wright continued photography of the highway and destinations attractive to tourism and recreation. Public input informed these visuals.

Munson submitted the presentation in digital form to Chris Carrillo, then Deputy Chief of Staff for the new Third District County Supervisor James Ramos.

Both Ray Desselle (Caltrans) and Tom Hudson (LUS) vetted and approved the presentation.

“Your team’s interest in pursuing a Scenic Highway designation is one of three that I know of for highway corridors around the County. This represents real opportunity for tourism development” – Tom Hudson 6.10.13

Endorsements continued, including: Dave Cole, co-founder of the King of the Hammers off-road racing event (which draws tens of thousands of national and international fans, race teams and their families to the Johnson Valley OHV Area on SR 247) added Hammering Productions to the sponsor list.

Jim Harvey presented the Scenic 247 PowerPoint to the Joshua Tree Gateway Communities Tourism Committee and received their endorsement.

2014

Supervisor James Ramos, asked the Committee to request endorsements from both of his recently-established Municipal Advisory Councils.

January 2014:

Catalyst Marketing invited Munson to participate in research for the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency’s Domestic Tourism Program in the desert area.

In her last e-mail conversation with Tom Hudson, she reported, “Aside from general familiarity with the high desert attractions, one specific project I brought to the table during our first meeting in January was the Homestead Valley Community Council campaign to have SR 247 designated as a Scenic Highway.”

July 2014:

The Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley Municipal Advisory Council meeting voted unanimously to approve the proposal for scenic status, adding “Scenic Highway 247 promotion will tie in perfectly with the recently launched California Outdoor Playground marketing of San Bernardino County.”

Sarah Kennington, reported that, as a board member of the Morongo Basin Conservation Association, she had presented the Scenic 247 proposal and signed them up as an organization sponsor.

Bev Lowry, Field Representative for Supervisor Ramos, got a “very positive endorsement” from the Barstow Chamber of Commerce.

August 2014:

Ray Desselle confirmed County, Town, City and BLM codes, now in place, encourage any development maintain the existing character of the area, and the Scenic 247 Corridor would not change that.

Reassured by this information, the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council meeting voted to endorse the Scenic Highway proposal unanimously.

(Communities represented: Flamingo Heights, Joshua Tree, Landers, Morongo Valley, Pioneertown, Copper Mountain Mesa, Desert Heights, Wonder Valley, and Yucca Mesa.)

October 2014:

The road map of California Desert Scenic Routes, published on the 20th anniversary of the Desert Protection Act, included a Barbara Harris photo of the highway crossing Pipes Wash, and featured SR 247 on their map of scenic routes. The background image is the Betty Munson photo from Page 1 in the Scenic 247 presentation. It shows the vista from the descent through the Ord Mountains, across to Lucerne Valley to the San Bernardino Mountains.

HVCC heard the County of San Bernardino Land Use Services had begun the process for the Supervisors to make adjustments in the County scenic highway regulations, so County would conform to the State Scenic Highway Codes.

2015

The Scenic 247 presentation first appears on www.scenichighway247, along with the Committee's Mission Statement, Map of "*Terrain Visible to the Traveler*," the 4-page brochure "*The Case for Scenic 247*," and sponsor list. Although this website remains a work in progress with a goal to eventually become a tour guide with interactive map, it has attracted much attention to the Scenic 247 proposal and generated responses. (The Scenic 247 documents also appear on www.hvccsite.org)

January 2015:

At the request of Chairman James Ramos, on Tuesday, January 27, Terri Rahhal, LUS, presented to the Board of Supervisors the Scenic Highway Designation enhancements for State Route 247. Scenic 247 Committee members attended to make comments. Though Scenic 247 was not mentioned by name, Committee members mentioned it.

May 2015:

Munson wrote to Phil Paule, Ramos' Chief of Staff, relaying questions from the public about the Scenic 247 campaign. "The Homestead Valley Community Council meeting is next Monday, May 18. The

Lucerne Valley/Johnson Valley MAC meets on Thursday, May 21. There are attendees at both meetings who have an interest in any news." No reply.

July 2015:

Jim Schooler, Field Rep for State Senator Jean Fuller came to the HVCC meeting, heard about Scenic 247, and spread the word in Sacramento about it.

September 2015:

Schooler told the HVCC meeting that there was good feedback on our presentation, kudos for a grass roots effort, and that he was going to make contact in the County to try to set up a liaison between them.

December 2015:

Jim Schooler reported, "To update you on the Scenic 247 initiative, I heard back from Mark Lundquist (Supervisor Ramos' Field Representative) and he was told that the project would require a \$500,000 study before moving forward. There was talk of the County and State splitting the cost. I am looking in to the accuracy of that and will get back with you when I hear something.

"According to Mark Lundquist, the individual at the County who is working on the Scenic 247 issue is Josh Candelaria, the Legislative Affairs Director under the County CEO."

Public reaction to this information: amazement. The Scenic 247 Committee and its supporters had volunteered all time and expenses. They intended to continue doing so.

In a Review and Update statement to the HVCC, Scenic 247 Committee members, County and Caltrans, Munson wrote: "We have never asked for government money; we never even planned to agitate for money to be spent to immediately erect poppy signs. All we ever wanted is the official designation, so Scenic 247 can be noted on the maps, included in the itineraries, promoted to the tour operators as a California Scenic Highway."

The Committee began discussing more photography and resumption of the mile-by-mile Visual Assessment, on hold while waiting for County directions, and writing comments on renewable energy projects threatening high desert scenic resources.

2016

January 2016:

Caltrans' Steven Magallanes forwarded the Munson update to the new District Landscape Architect, John Stanton. (Ray Desselle had been promoted to Deputy of Planning. Magallanes said they were still in contact

with him about 247.

Meeting locations suggested to report developments:

- LVEDA because Lucerne Valley is central on SR247, and County and State representatives are always on the agenda, and
- HVCC because the Scenic 247 committee is an HVCC committee, and their meetings are also attended by County and State representatives (although they had not seen Ramos Chief of Staff, Phil Paule, in some time). Joanna Wright, then president of HVCC, proposed we inform the public at both, hoping he could explain the half-million-dollar study.

March 2016:

The Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley MAC wrote to Supervisor Ramos: “We appreciate your support of Scenic Highway 247. We request that you, or someone else closely involved, come to speak to our MAC meeting to let your constituents know what is being done and what to expect.” No response.

October 2016:

Munson widely circulated a message to all who had expressed interest in the Scenic 247 proposal. She voiced the Committee’s shock at the construction of a “water tower” cell transmission tower close to SR 247 with no prior notice. It intrudes on an undeveloped vista, visible to travelers for many miles. The concern: that all the Committee communications and citizen comments during recent Countywide Plan workshops had been ignored by Land Use Services.

Jim Harvey shared the opinions of many: “Given the known community sensitivity to obtrusive projects in this corridor, someone could have notified us when the CUP request came in, with very little extra effort. We need to be able to review the county findings as outlined and dispute or make comments to them. Community input is imperative to the checks and balances principle that is supposed to be built into this process.”

Claudia Spotts, president of the Morongo Basin Historical Society, wrote: “I want to thank you for your years of work to save the vistas along S.R. 247 known as Old Woman Springs Road. What a disgrace that a few can in a few minutes wipe out all the hours of work you and many concerned citizens and communities have dedicated to trying to preserve this scenic landmark for future generations to enjoy.”

2017

January 2017:

The Scenic 247 Committee criticized the Ord Mountain Solar Project, one of many to reiterate: “We also

urge you to heed Caltrans’ comment on the DRECP [Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan]: Ensure each energy project considers impact upon officially designated and eligible State Scenic Highways.”

These and other comments on industrial renewable energy projects circulated online, garnering widespread public support.

Magallanes informed the Committee that Caltrans might have a new permanent supervisor by middle of 2017. He would supply all previous information for review and requested to be copied on any updates.

February 2017:

Chuck Bell, Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association (LVEDA) president, wrote Supervisor Ramos and LUS, “The organizations listed below [on 247 letterhead] have strongly endorsed the State “Scenic Hwy 247” designation. It’s currently a County “Scenic Highway.” The “Scenic 247 Committee” of the Homestead Valley Community Council has been spearheading this for years. Last we heard – both County, Caltrans and our local and State reps were in ‘strong’ favor and working on it. But nothing seems to be happening yet – even with what seemed to be full support from all involved entities.

“...With the universal support - and the fact that this entire highway is obviously “scenic” – with especially the stretch from Lucerne Valley to Barstow being one of the last ‘lonely’ roads left in s. Calif. - with nothing but great desert vistas - and maybe the last road in s. Calif. that is eligible – we need to get it done.”

Joanna Wright invited Supervisor Ramos to a meeting with HVCC for updates on 247 and other local issues. Following his advice and encouraging comments from Terri Rahhal, then LUS Planning Director, Sarah Kennington volunteered to open communications with Molly Wiltshire, Ramos’ Field Representative, to decide on time and venue for the Committee to meet with County planners and Caltrans representatives.

Munson wrote to Magallanes, inviting him or someone he recommended to this conference. He replied, “Acting District Landscape Architect is Matthew Hall. He is the new contact for this project. We must follow certain policy as to who is the contact person. I will share any and all information I have with him. Good Luck with your proposal!”

March 2017:

Kennington made contact with Molly Wiltshire and Terri Rahhal, asking for a face-to-face 247 meeting. It was considered essential to include John Stanton,

interim District Landscape Architect, at a conference, for his input regarding the \$500,000 estimate for the study that the Scenic Guidelines stipulate. Only Caltrans could clarify this.

Kennington finally got an arrangement for a short teleconference meeting, to talk about plans and expectations for a future conference with all parties, either in Lucerne Valley Community Center (arranged by Chuck Bell) or Johnson Valley Community Center (arranged by Joanna Wright).

Final choice, Lucerne Valley, April 20.
Karen Watkins, Land Use Services Planning Manager, invited Caltrans to have a representative attend in person or by phone.

April 2017:
HVCC Newsletter, April 2017:
The status of the Scenic 247 campaign with solar fields proposed in the scenic corridor brought out the conflicting opinions of what steps to take. The Supervisor plans a small conference of parties active in the process, to “get us all on the same page.”
Jim Schooler, Field Representative for State Senator Jean Fuller, agreed such a meeting would help to “close the loop,” getting everyone who knows the answers to the table.

Sarah Kennington e-mailed an invitation and information supplied by Karen Watkins to Scenic 247 Committee members and supporters.

April 20, 2017:
Meeting in Lucerne Valley:
From the Scenic 247 Committee:
Betty Munson as Chair; Joanna Wright; Jim Harvey; Ken Brock, HVCC delegate from Flamingo Heights; Sarah Kennington.

From Lucerne Valley:
Chuck Bell (LVEDA); Jean Magee (LVEDA and the Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley Municipal Advisory Council, LV/JV MAC).

From County Land Use Services:
Planning Director Terry Rahhal, Planning Manager Karen Watkins, and Associate Planner Evan Evangelopoulos. They brought documentation of successful Scenic Highway proposals and prints of the Caltrans scenic process chart. They invited Caltrans Landscape Architect John Stanton to join in by phone.

Also at the table: Supervisor Ramos’ Chief of Staff Molly Wiltshire, Legislative Analyst Tony Mejia, and Ramos’ Field Representative Mark Lundquist.

State Senator Jean Fuller’s Field Representative Jim Schooler also attended.

The main action item resulting: John Stanton told the

conference that a licensed Landscape Architect must oversee documentation of the scenic qualities of the 78 miles of highway, mile by mile. This was the first time anyone had heard or read that.

Sarah Kennington began a long search. She wrote, “While our volunteer committee has done much to document the corridor, none of us are landscape architects and do not have a budget to hire one.”

Chuck Bell, Jim Harvey, and Karen Watkins also joined this search.

Referrals mostly had urban backgrounds; a university offer necessitated several meeting times. One seemingly-viable offer came in far too costly.

Kennington called on the writers of the Caltrans-approved scenic proposal for Gaviota Coast, because they did not show they had used the services of a licensed Landscape Architect. Their only Caltrans participation: one of their Landscape Architects went on a ride-along.

Barbara Harris noted, “We do not see the Landscape Architect requirement in writing anywhere.”

June 1, 2017:
A Caltrans’ Transportation Concept Report on the Scenic designation states Highway 247 already has a local scenic route designation in the County General Plan. The scenic route corridor development standards apply to development proposed adjacent to (within 200 ft. of) the scenic route. The Green Rock Mine Rd. cell tower site is located approximately 800 ft. from Hwy 247, well beyond the boundary of the designated scenic corridor.” (This was a vast disagreement with everyone’s understanding of the words, “Scenic Corridor.”)

July 2017:
Kennington and others went to great lengths to acquire the services of a Landscape Architect, pro bono, without success.

Barbara Harris showed the Scenic 247 PowerPoint presentation to the Yucca Valley Town Council, and to the Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley Municipal Advisory Council meeting.

August 8, 2017:
The Committee commented in a letter on the draft Renewable Energy and Conservation Element of the County Plan, and by teleconference during the Board of Supervisors meeting, repeating Caltrans’ warning to ensure an energy project considers its impact on highways eligible for State Scenic Highway status.

August 10, 2017:
Scenic 247 Committee: Betty Munson, Joanna

Wright, Sarah Kennington, Barbara Harris, Jim Harvey, Chuck Bell, Jim Hanley (an HVCC delegate from Johnson Valley) met to discuss the confirmations from Assemblyman Jay Obernolte and Senator Jean Fuller that Caltrans did NOT require a licensed Landscape Architect to help with Visual Assessment of the scenic corridor, contrary to our understanding from our April 20 meeting with members of the Land Use Services and Caltrans. The Committee agreed to the Visual Assessment.

The meeting also requested Betty Munson circulate the Scenic 247 RECE comment letter to everyone on the Committee and our contacts with the County, including Paul Smith, Chair of the Planning Commission, and the State.

August 14, 2017:

Steve Magallanes responded to questions from Munson, and her request for one of their staff landscape architects to participate, "I have forwarded your request to my Acting Senior, Tom Yi, as well as our newly appointed Senior, Rose Bishop."

In a callback to Munson, Ray Desselle reiterated his support for the project. Desselle was firm that "scenic corridor" means the entire landscape visible from the highway. He said he had dealt with plenty of argument about that, but it was just common sense.

John Stanton spoke with the statewide coordinator of scenic highways, said she was anxious to visit the area, but probably could not make it until September or October.

HVCC Newsletter, August 2017:

In an update on Scenic 247, "We find plain English sometimes when we least expect it. Since the campaign for Scenic Highway status for SR 247 began in 2009, we have known the State Scenic Highway Program deemed this roadway eligible for the scenic designation.

"On the California Department of Transportation website, see plain English found on this link: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/vol1/sec3/community/ch27via/chap27via.htm#scenic>

"Under Chapter 27 – Visual & Aesthetics Review – we find two statements:

"The intent of the State Scenic Highway Program is to protect and enhance California's natural scenic beauty."

"If a highway is listed as eligible for official designation, it is also part of the Scenic Highway System and care must be taken to preserve its eligible status.

Ord Mountain and Siena Solar Projects plan to build on both sides of 247, not just in the scenic corridor

but next to the roadway. If the County approves these projects, they are plainly not taking care to act on the state's plain English."

September 2017:

The Scenic 247 Committee letter to the Desert Advisory Committee of the BLM, presented at their meeting in Pahrump NV, outlined the proven benefits to rural communities from Scenic Highway tourism, contrasted to the industrialization planned by the DRECP.

HVCC Newsletter, October 13, 2017:

"Members of the Scenic 247 Committee and the Morongo Basin Conservation Association met briefly with State Senator Jean Fuller on Friday, October 13, in her field office in Yucca Valley." Munson gave her notes with a brief history of the Scenic 247 campaign, and the question: "Has the State Lands Commission considered the Caltrans requirements for SR 247, and another land exchange with BLM away from the scenic corridor and rural communities?"

2018

March 21, 2018: Kennington reported her meeting with Sara Fairchild, licensed Landscape Architect, who volunteered to assist with the Visual Assessment, and was available for the planned Ride-along.

March 29, 2018: Ride-along, on the Barstow Road section from Lucerne Valley to Barstow outskirts and back, then on the Old Woman Springs Road section to Larrea Road in Johnson Valley.

From Caltrans Landscape Architect Department:

- Rose Bishop, Supervisor
- Tony Calvillo, Landscape Associate

From Scenic 247 Committee:

- Betty Munson, chair
- Sarah Kennington, coordinator
- Sara Fairchild, Landscape Architect
- Court Prittie, JVIA Director, driver

From Lucerne Valley:

- Chuck Bell, guide and driver

The Committee circulated notes describing the day. Chuck Bell agendized the report for the April LVEDA meeting, and requested support from Assemblyman Jay Obernolte.

April 2018:

Kennington to Rose Bishop: "...In order to show Caltrans we have support from residents as well, we are discussing holding at least two meetings.

"I asked Chuck Bell if our presentation could be on the agenda for the May 1 meeting of the Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association. LVEDA

meetings are well-publicized, and their venue can accommodate a good number of people. I thought this a good way to reach the people around Lucerne Valley. To reach people in the Yucca Valley direction, we can show the presentation at a Homestead Valley Community Council meeting in Landers, also in May.” Kennington invited Bishop to both meetings.

April 13, 2018:

The Committee held a public review of the updated Scenic 247 presentation at the JVIA General Meeting at the Johnson Valley Community Center.

Barbara Harris continued seasonal photography for the Visual Assessment and promotional uses on the website www.scenichighway247.com.

Jim Harvey began adding a scenic slideshow, with photo locations identified, to the website.

Sarah Kennington told Molly Wiltshire that Rose Bishop was encouraging and enthusiastic about the Scenic 247 Committee accomplishments, and the prospects for Caltrans approval.

“With BOS’s support, LUS assistance, a licensed landscape architect volunteering her time to the Committee, Caltrans on board - full steam ahead!”

May 3, 2018:

Karen Watkins said the required Letter of Intent from the County was drafted and in the review process. “Rose Bishop at Caltrans and I are working together. The letter may not need to go to the Board of Supervisors for action. I will let you know when the letter has been signed.”

Munson and Kennington made Scenic 247 PowerPoint presentations at two public meetings: LVEDA, May 1, at the Lucerne Valley Senior Center HVCC, May 21, at Landers Belfield Hall

May 23, 2018:

Scenic 247 comment letter to the County Planning Commission urging adoption of the original RECE Policy 4.10 and its subpolicies, arguing the citizens who created the Homestead Valley Community Plan with the goal of maintaining the unique character of the rural desert communities “inspired our campaign for Scenic Highway 247, to benefit our disadvantaged communities. Let’s not throw away a unique regional asset in favor of a major blight. Keep the original Policy 4.10 as written.”

June 2018:

June 4: Karen Watkins reported Rose Bishop and Caltrans had reviewed the draft Letter of Intent and stated it is to be submitted simultaneously with the proposal package.

June 18, 2018:

HVCC meeting: Scenic 247 Committee Report on the Letter of Intent

July 26, 2018:

Meeting in San Bernardino Land Use Services: Sara Fairchild, Sarah Kennington, Jim Harvey
By Phone: Betty Munson, Chuck Bell, Barbara Harris

HVCC Newsletter, November 2018:

Kennington reported Fairchild submitted a sample Visual Assessment to Rose Bishop for review several weeks ago, but had received no response.

2019

February 2019:

Scenic 247 Committee comment on Calcite Solar, ditto many previous RE comments.

March 2019:

HVCC meeting: Jim Harvey complimented Sara Fairchild on her work the Visual Assessment; also on her words quoted in news reports. “Our little committee was on 650-700 national affiliates. Rose Bishop complimented our efforts, possibly she had read Sara’s comment.”

March 27, 2019:

Sarah Kennington, Jim Harvey, meeting with Yucca Valley Town Council.

April 2019:

In response to an e-mail from Kennington, our new Third District County Supervisor Dawn Rowe said she would discuss 247 with the new city manager when in Barstow, and with Land Use Services.

Summer and Fall 2019: More photography, text, and reviewing of Sara Fairchild’s Visual Assessment.

October 2019:

Kennington and Fairchild announced the delivery of printed copies of the draft Visual Assessment, including detail maps by Brian Hammer, for review and comment by Rose Bishop and Land Use Services.

Revisions begun of the draft Visual Assessment, based on feedback, communicated to the Committee by Rose Bishop, from Caltrans Sacramento (“headquarters”) review of the first draft.

2020

Intensive research for the Visual Assessment and maps continues by Sara Fairchild, Jim Harvey and Brian Hammer.

February 2020: General shutdown and stay-at-home orders canceled HVCC, LVEDA and Morongo Basin MAC public meetings. Updates and announcements continued via e-mail.

May 6, 2020:

Sara Fairchild submits her narrative and choice of photos for use as Figures illustrating scenic qualities and intrustions to the Committee. Work resumes on the graphic presentation of the Visual Assessment. Betty Munson and Barabara Harris collaborate on the design; Jim Harvey suplies more photography.

May 15, 2020:

Jim Harvey announced the California Desert Coalition endorsement of the Scenic 247 campaign.

June 15, 2020:

Layout of Visual Assessment document continues, including research in archives for documentation and original photograh by Harris and Munson.

August 11, 2020:

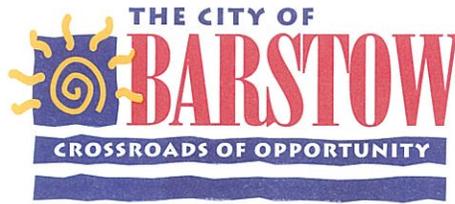
Jim Harvey spoke by phone with Christina at the City of Barstow. He briefly explained our campaign for scenic designation of SR 247 and the requirement that we provide the city with the VA document and maps.

He also advised her we were seeking a letter of support by the City of Barstow per San Bernardino County and Caltrans requirements. He stated at least three times in the call that he would take no more than five minutes of City Manager Cindy Prothro's time, to get her a copy of the VA and make a formal request for the letter of support. Christina set a meeting with City Manager Prothro for Wednesday, August 19, 11:00 a.m.

On August 12th he received a voicemail message from Christina stating the meeting would not be scheduled because City Manager Prothro had already met with someone from our committee. This is not true. We will have to send an electronic version of the VA and request for a support letter but there is no e-mail address or process for this on the city website.

August 18, 2020

After many reviews and revisions, the Visual Assessment with Scenic Figre Maps and Land Use Maps are finalized.



July 05, 2016

Ms. Betty Munson
Chair, Scenic 247 Committee
4880 Bonanza Road
Johnson Valley, CA 92285

Dear Ms. Munson,

My understanding is that the Scenic 247 Committee is working to achieve State Scenic Highway designation for Highway 247 that directly connects Barstow to Yucca Valley. A scenic highway designation helps attract tourism, heightens awareness of natural, historical and recreational qualities, and promotes the beauty and points of interest on the route.

As Mayor of the City of Barstow, I am happy to offer my support in your efforts to attain the scenic highway designation. As you are aware, the Barstow area has many natural wonders that attract many tourists throughout the year. I look forward to the expected increased tourism in the future for our community from the scenic highway designation.

Please let me know if I may be of further assistance. I wish you the very best in achieving your goal of a State Scenic Highway designation for Highway 247.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre
Mayor, City of Barstow
760-255-5195

Cc: Beverly Lowry

FOR SCENIC HIGHWAY 247

**Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley Municipal Advisory Council
LV Community Center, 33187 Highway 247 East, Lucerne Valley CA 92356**

RECOMMENDATION ON ISSUE:

**Establish State Route 247 as an Official
California State Scenic Highway**

Dear Supervisor Ramos:

The Council approves and endorses the Scenic 247 Committee in its efforts to have State Route 247 recognized officially as a State Scenic Highway.

247 is included in the Scenic Highway system, and has long been listed by Caltrans as eligible for Scenic Highway status. The Committee has already identified many points of interest and is preparing a website to promote the recreational and scenic qualities of our area.

Scenic Highway 247 promotion will tie in perfectly with the recently launched California Outdoor Playground marketing of San Bernardino County.

Organizations and destinations in the 247 area believe that this official recognition will increase tourism, therefore improve our stagnant economy. We agree with them.

Therefore we recommend you lend your support to the establishment of a scenic corridor, as a proven benefit for our communities, businesses and the economy of San Bernardino County.

We attach the Committee's letter to the MAC and documents supporting this campaign.

**Recommendation so moved and unanimously approved, July 17, 2014
Members of the Lucerne Valley-Johnson Valley Municipal Advisory Council**

Richard Selby, Chairman

Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council
Regular July 14, 2014 Meeting
Addendum to Agenda Item I.1.
RESOLUTION NO. MB-MAC005

A RESOLUTION
OF THE MORONGO BASIN MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION
BY THE SCENIC HIGHWAY 247 COMMITTEE OF THE HOMESTEAD VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL
TO SECURE "SCENIC HIGHWAY DESIGNATION" FOR STATE ROUTE 247
AS MORE SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED BELOW

WHEREAS, The Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council is an advisory body appointed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Bernardino, and

WHEREAS, research shows that Scenic Highway designation enhances tourism and local pride in promoting the beauty and points of interest on the route, and benefits the local economy, which is consistent with the objectives of the Economic Development Agency's marketing plan to draw more visitors to the County's mountain and desert attractions, and

WHEREAS, Highway 247 in the County of San Bernardino, Third District, meets Caltrans eligibility requirements for Scenic Highway Designation except for an application by the Board of Supervisors as the governing body for Scenic 247, and

WHEREAS, the Scenic 247 Committee of the Homestead Valley Community Council has acquired much of the research material and satisfied all requirements except those that can only be completed by County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors as set forth in "Caltrans Scenic Highway Guidelines" for the upgrading of the status of State Route 247 from "Eligible" to "Scenic," and

WHEREAS, passage of this resolution affirms that the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council supports the Scenic 247 Committee application for Scenic Highway designation for State Route 247, NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by Resolution No. MB-MAC005 that the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council urges the County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors to enact a Corridor Protection Program to safeguard and enhance scenic resources along State Route 247 and proceed with nomination as a California Scenic Highway.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council at a regular meeting held this Fourteenth day of July 2014, by the following vote:

AYES: 9
NOES: 0
ABSENT: 0
ABSTAIN: 0

By:


Mike Lipsitz, Chair

ATTEST:

M. R.
Dr. Max Rossi, Secretary



February 17, 2017

Tom Hudson, Director Land Use Services
385 N. Arrowhead Ave., 1st Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0187
tom.hudson@lus.sbcounty.gov

Dear Mr. Hudson,

The Morongo Basin Conservation Association (MBCA) joins the coalition of organizations in support of designating Highway 247 / Old Woman's Springs Road a California Scenic Highway.

During the County workshops, Scenic 247 was discussed and endorsed as a collectively held "value" worthy of protection in the HVCC Community Plan. The residents of Morongo Basin and Homestead Valley, along with the recent explosion of visiting tourists will celebrate and cherish the protections the Scenic Highway status would bring to these fragile iconic landscapes.

The Scenic 247 Campaign has demonstrated the strongly held desire of citizens, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, cultural and conservation organizations from Bartow to Yucca Valley to protect the area's scenic resources that draw eco-tourism to our area. All recognize that this "disadvantaged" rural area has one significant advantage: miles of undeveloped open desert, with a historic highway linking world-famous mountain and desert destinations and Route 66. The economic benefits of Scenic Highway designation are clearly apparent. (See www.scenichighway247.com.)

The MBCA applauds your efforts in January 2015 to update the San Bernardino County Development Code to maintain consistency with the State of California Scenic Highway Program Guidelines. As you know, Highway 247 already has a local scenic route designation in the County General Plan.

Your early support of the Scenic Highway 247 campaign was very encouraging. This effort also received support from Ray Desselle, Caltrans Landscape Architect. Supervisor James Ramos and two of his field representatives have actively supported the Scenic 247 campaign, as have both Municipal Advisory Councils. Senator Jean Fuller's Field Representative, Jim Schooler has worked to coordinate County and State efforts to achieve State Scenic Highway status for 247.

Last October, Terri Rahal, Planning Director LUS wrote Betty Munson: "Please be assured that County staff has not forgotten community sentiments about maintaining scenic qualities in this area, and seeking designation of Hwy 247 as a California Scenic Highway." Ms. Rahal continued that it was her understanding that Caltrans had reviewed the County's scenic route development standards and found them to be consistent with the Scenic Highway program guidelines, subject to joint review and concurrence on a corridor-specific study, specifying key scenic resources and the boundaries of the scenic resources management area.

Why is it after the County and the Senator's stated support for this campaign that 247 has yet to be designated a California Scenic Highway? After more than seven years of active citizen campaigning and County efforts, it is time for action!

We look forward to hearing from you with an update on the status of this initiative. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration to designate 247 a California Scenic Highway.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kennington, President
Morongo Basin Conservation Association

Cc: James Ramos; Robert Lovingood; Terri Rahal; John Oquendo; Betty Munson; Chrystale Sonick

California Desert Coalition

P.O. Box 331, Pioneertown, CA 92268
cadesertcoalition.org ~ info@cadesertcoalition.org

May 14th

Betty Munson, President
Scenic California Highway 247 Committee
51720 Hacienda Rd #247
Johnson Valley, CA 92285

Dear President Munson

The California Desert Coalition (CDC) is a grassroots, issue advocacy non-profit, deeply committed to the protection of the Mojave Desert ecosystem and its scenic and cultural resource values. We build coalitions to promote a deeper understanding of public policy issues and stitch together the voices that are affected by these decisions.

Since the inaugural citizen efforts, CDC has supported the nomination of SR247 encompassing both parts of Old Woman Springs Rd and Barstow Rd for a State Scenic Highway expressing written support to our state senator and other decisionmakers. We believe that this route is a such a strong candidate for this status because it meets ALL the stated criteria for this designation per Department of Transportation, i.e.:

- **The State or county highway consists of a scenic corridor that is comprised of a memorable landscape that showcases the natural scenic beauty or agriculture of California (see definition for ‘vividness’, under Section III: Step 1, Visual Assessment).**
The route winds around the federally protected landscapes of the Sand-to-Snow National Monument, the Bighorn Mountains Wilderness, the Rodman-Ord Mountain Wilderness, the Creosote King Clone. Because of these National Conservation Lands the vistas are largely unchanged throughout the corridor.
- **Existing visual intrusions do not significantly impact the scenic corridor (see definitions for ‘intactness’ and ‘unity’ below, under Section III. Step 1: Visual Assessment).**
The landscape through SR247 is essentially undeveloped, open space with unchanged vistas from 1950: established communities of Flamingo Heights, Landers, and Johnson Valley several miles away removed from the Highway.
- **Demonstration of strong local support for the proposed scenic highway designation.**
The effort to seek the nomination was a completely local citizen funded effort evidenced by the volunteer work of a local landscape architect who developed the required visual assessment. County and local Decisionmakers, local community organizations, businesses, non-profits and the San Bernardino County Land Use has supported the nomination.
- **The length of the proposed scenic highway is not less than a mile and is not segmented.**
The route is an uninterrupted 60+ mile route.

Moreover, per the DOT website, SR247 meets both the intent of the law, i.e.

“The stated intent (Streets and Highway Code Section 260) of the California Scenic Highway Program is to protect and enhance California's natural beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the State's scenic resources.”

and satisfies salient element of the law:

“The stated intent (Streets and Highway Code Section 260) of the California Scenic Highway Program is to protect and enhance California's natural beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the State's scenic resources. “

With all this in mind, CDC strongly supports the efforts of the Committee to seek approval of the nomination of SR247 for Scenic Highway Status.

April Sall, President

Proponents Betty Munson and Joanna Wright of a Scenic Highway designation for Route 247 requested support of the MAC for that effort, with Munson saying that it would help draw tourists through the area. MAC Chairman and Supervisor's Field Representative Mike Lipsitz explained that a scenic highway designation is descriptive only—it has “no teeth” with regard to regulating development that accords with existing zoning. Environmental activist Pat Flanagan said that the designation is considered when evaluating projects that are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. The MAC passed a resolution supporting the Scenic Highway designation.z107