

Mojave Chamber of Commerce: Highlights of the Monthly Community Meeting, 25 August 2022.

The meeting this month featured a presentation on the proposed Mojave Inland Port by Lorelei Oviatt, head of the Kern County Planning Dept.

Background: Ports in Long Beach and Los Angeles cannot expand and cannot unload and store the amount of cargo shipped to the West Coast. There is a shortage of trucks also. All of those factors create shortages of supplies throughout the country.

Inland Ports: There is federal money to develop inland ports to relieve the back up at the coastal ports. The state of California is supporting the development of inland ports; in addition to Mojave, Merced and Fresno are under consideration. The major push for development of the inland port is coming from the management of the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports. The Alameda Corridor rail line was built to relieve truck traffic from the LA/LB ports, but is under-utilized. Major funding for the project is from Pioneer Partners, a port management company, with support from BNSF rail company.

The Argument for Mojave: Pioneer Partners owns property, zoned for industrial development, located northeast of MASP. The property is serviced by 2 freeway exits/entrances, which are under-utilized, and a BNSF rail spur. MASP has a long runway which can accommodate cargo planes. Most of the cargo will be trucked east and south to the Inland Empire logistic warehouses, although some trucks will carry cargo to Santa Clarita and the San Fernando Valley.

Mitigation: No public hearing is required because the property is already zoned for industrial development. However, the Planning Dept. can condition construction permits on the developers meeting environmental, housing, and traffic concerns. The "Trona Trolley" crossing will require a new traffic route, possibly an overpass, to separate train and vehicular traffic. The Tehachapi-to-Bakersfield highway will require special truck lanes. Money for that project is available and the construction of those lanes is high priority.

Other Issues: Ms. Oviatt mentioned several other items of interest to Kern County including the proposed ban on the sale of gas-powered cars by the year 2035, which will have an enormous impact on Kern County. The policy is very hard on smaller counties because the decrease in revenues will decrease funds for public services. Kern county expects a decrease of at least \$90 million. Carbon capture projects for the oil fields of west Kern; battery storage facilities for east Kern; pipelines for transporting "green" hydrogen and carbon dioxide, and demand for water were also given a brief overview. Don Woodward, Kern County Parks, reported that agreements have been reached (as of August 24) on the upgrade for the East Park. The project now goes to design consultants, then bids for construction. He anticipates successful completion of the park by the June 2024 deadline.

Community Participation: Residents of Mojave are urged to create a list of desirable improvements to the town and make it known to county, state, and federal government representatives, as well as to the large corporations which do business in Mojave. The Mojave Chamber of Commerce can act as a liaison to promote projects which improve the business climate and the quality of life in Mojave. Jacob Lopez, field representative for Rep. Kevin McCarthy, also invited the attendees to email or call the office with concerns and needs.

Sales tax increase discussion is scheduled for Monday, August 29, 6 pm, at the Vets Bldg.