

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Supervisor Marion Ashley

SUBMITTAL DATE:
November 1, 2007

SUBJECT: San Gorgonio Pass Heritage Corridor Project

BACKGROUND: The San Gorgonio Pass area contains a variety of agricultural activities, some of which are particularly suited to the area due primarily to its altitude and other factors, and it is— and was, historically—very important as the main eastern gateway into Southern California. Crops such as apples, cherries, and lavender are suited to this area, and for many years have lent themselves to local festivals such as those in Beaumont (Cherry Festival) and Oak Glen (numerous apple harvest-related activities, in nearby San Bernardino County, “u-pick” farms, and other important tourism-oriented and community image-making activities. The area was crossed by the historic Bradshaw Trail, and contains important historical resources such as the Edward Dean Museum and Gardens, the Gilman Ranch, the San Timoteo Schoolhouse, the Highland Springs Resort, and other resources. The Pass’s agricultural activities and historical resources are important to the tourism based component of the area’s economy, as well as the special image and character of the area and its individual communities, and they set this area apart from the rest of the County and all of Southern California as a unique and special place.

It would be beneficial to the area’s agriculture, businesses, and the public, to work together with local citizens, cities, and other agencies to enhance the area’s tourism potential and reinforce its agricultural heritage/historical image. In addition, the State of California, through AB 2635, called the “California Heritage Corridor Act” (attached), passed into law in 2006 and gave direction and funding for the California Department of Parks and Recreation, working with Caltrans, to designate and develop signage to identify historical resources around the state. One of the keys to enhancing the tourism

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REVIEWED BY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

DATE

Tina Grande
Departmental Conference

Dep't Recomm.: Consent Policy
Per Exec. Ofc.: Consent Policy

potential in the Pass area, is to enhance the signage identifying this area and its resources to I-10 motorists, and identifying routes from the freeway to local points of agricultural and historical interest.

Therefore, I propose that a Heritage Corridor be established in the San Gorgonio Pass area, that it be a cooperative effort that includes both the County and initially, the Cities of Banning and Beaumont, and other affected local agencies, and that a task force be appointed to study ways of enhancing the tourism potential and community image of the area, and report back to the Board, within 90 days, with its recommendations. The task force would contact and work with the referenced state agencies, to coordinate the Heritage Corridor project with the California Heritage Corridor program administered by the state. The task force would consider matters relating to identifying routes important to tourism in the area and identifying important sites and activities along those routes, and signage and advertising for both, improvements to cultural, civic, park, and trail facilities in the area, and possible future allowances for small scale businesses, such as fruit stands, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and hotels/motels that might be appropriate for the area and supportive of the overall objectives for the Heritage Corridor. If the task force has not completed its recommendations within 90 days, the task force would be requested to provide the Board with a report at that time regarding their progress toward producing the recommendations. It is envisioned that their recommendations could constitute an initial step toward possible additional actions in the future. If the Heritage Corridor recommendations are implemented successfully, then later, other local cities (in addition to Beaumont and Banning) and our neighbor, San Bernardino County, might be brought into in an expanded Heritage Corridor effort.

I envision that the San Gorgonio Pass Heritage Corridor Task Force would be comprised of the following organizations and individuals: Riverside County TLMA/Planning Department, TLMA/Transportation Department, Regional Parks and Open Space District, Agricultural Commissioner, and Economic Development Agency; the Beaumont-Cherry Valley Parks and Recreation District, the Cities of Banning and Beaumont, the Building Industry Association, the Farm Bureau, Tina Kummerle (Highland Springs Resort) and Scott Riley (Oak Glen).

It should be emphasized that is envisioned this project is intended to benefit the agriculture, businesses, and citizens of the San Gorgonio Pass area, and that wherever possible, implementation measures should be voluntary in nature. No property rights are intended to be adversely affected by this project.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors: 1) establish a San Gorgonio Pass Heritage Corridor Task Force, as described herein; 2) direct the task force to develop recommendations, including an overall strategy and specific actions, for the Board to consider adopting that would implement the concept of a Heritage Corridor in the San Gorgonio Pass area; and 3) direct the task force to report back to the Board with their recommendations, or their progress toward preparing them, within 90 days.