

## Questions and Answers: Supervisor Ramos at the February Meeting

County Supervisor James Ramos spoke to a full house at the February 20th HVCC meeting in the Johnson Valley Community Center. The audience of Homestead Valley residents and people from as far away as Joshua Tree and Apple Valley came to talk about many shared concerns. Ramos discussed many issues, including public safety and veterans' homelessness.



**INDUSTRIAL SOLAR** Brian and Sue Hammer of Lucerne Valley face having 12-foot solar panels on three sides of the place they have worked on as their retirement home. Their heartbreak and anger contrast with misguided state and federal mandates and heedless developers of the 483-acre Ord Mountain Solar project on Hwy 247. Downwind from blowing dust, in the path of rodents and snakes fleeing bulldozers, their dream of retirement to beautiful mountain views turns into a nightmare. In 2013, HVCC opposed lifting the County's Solar Moratorium. In 2016 we urged its renewal. Joanna Wright, president of HVCC, handed Ramos an updated copy of the 2016 HVCC resolution. Several other organizations have argued the Board of Supervisors need to reinstate it until the Renewable

Energy Element in the County Plan establishes firm guidelines. Desert dwellers have neither the time nor funds to keep opposing these projects one by one. Ramos said the Supervisors of urban districts must also be convinced not to allow industrializing the desert.

**SCENIC 247** 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.

**HAULED WATER** Since 2009, HVCC has fought the County's unwritten ban on building permits to property owners relying on hauled water. The State Legislature put that ban into writing last year, rendering many properties worthless. Our State Assemblyman Jay Obernolte's bill AB 366 would fix this, allowing development of up to ten units on parcels in existence before January 1, 2018, provided water to these properties comes from a legal source, delivered by a licensed water hauler. Supervisor

Ramos has sent support for AB 366 to Obernolte and brought a copy to the meeting. HVCC welcomes his backing, voted to also send a letter of support and asks everyone to send their own.

Assemblyman Jay Obernolte  
State Capitol Office, Room 4116  
Sacramento CA 94249

**PUBLIC SAFETY** Captain Jeff Joling of the San Bernardino County Sheriffs reported crime trends for 2016 seem much improved over 2015; the annual report comes out in March. He still advises to keep your vehicles and homes locked, check into some affordable alarm systems. He thanked the Supervisor for his support for public safety efforts throughout the entire County. CalFire Captain Tony Jones reported they were issuing burn permits that would be valid until April for those of us in the State Responsibility Areas to the south and west of Hwy 247. He warned of increased fuel coverage as the rains sprout grass, and suggested getting a burn permit to take care of brush clearance cuttings. County Fire Chief Mike Snow said their burn permits generally follow the same guidelines as CalFire. When asked about the future status of Johnson Valley Fire Station #43 he was not optimistic. He urged citizens to enroll in the training program for CERT, Community Emergency Response Teams, coming up in March.