

## Scenic 247 Committee Urges BLM Support of Tourism Revenues vs Renewable Energy Losses

*TO: Bureau of Land Management  
 September 25, 2014*

It is an ironic coincidence that after years of research and planning, our small volunteer Scenic 247 Committee has run headlong into conflict with massive corporate, federal and state campaigns to utilize the desert for industrial-scale renewable energy generation and transmission.

Even more ironic, the County of San Bernardino recently launched a marketing program to spread the word worldwide that there is so much here to offer the traveler, vacationer and tourist, in these mountains and the Mojave Desert.

The Scenic 247 Committee's campaign to change the status of State Route 247 to a Scenic Highway dovetails with this program. Scenic 247 is the central link between population centers and our recreational gold mine. A Scenic Highway is a proven magnet for travelers, building the economies of small towns and rural settlements, and community pride in our unique world.

Municipal Advisory Councils to the County Supervisor and many organizations and tourist destinations have endorsed Scenic 247.

San Bernardino County suffers from lack of revenues, lack of jobs. Population losses concern schools and businesses. The County is weighing the unknowns of industrializing private properties in Rural Living zones for renewable energy generation.

The County exports mineral resources, but little else to bring outside money into the region – except exporting the story of our attractions, to build tourism to support resident-serving enterprises. Highway businesses cannot survive on local population alone. The stores, restaurants, medical offices in our communities are supported by residents who benefit from tourism and recreation revenues. We are seeing too many close their doors.

Promotion of Scenic 247 was spurred by these considerations, backed by the prehistoric and historic heritage of the territory it traverses, and some of the least developed scenery

remaining in the State of California.

A major consideration for development in a scenic corridor is Visual Impact, how compatible is it with the character of the area? (Note: Many states and countries treat their rural and wild scenery as a natural resource, and it is).

The push for industrial renewable energy generation in the California desert is an exact contradiction to this value. Already, unpleasant visual impacts of wind turbines, massive solar fields and miles of transmission lines mar the legendary California experience for travelers.

Studies prove that people come to the desert from cities, other states and countries around the world, not for industrialization, but for wide open spaces. They seek these open spaces for relaxation, adventure and an opportunity to reconnect with nature.

Two specific threats to Scenic 247 values that have emerged are:  
 -the huge Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, deciding which parts of the wide open spaces to sacrifice in order to export energy at no benefit to ratepayers and taxpayers, and  
 -Southern California Edison's proposal to run the Coolwater-Lugo transmission line through undeveloped views and rural residences in the Scenic 247 corridor.

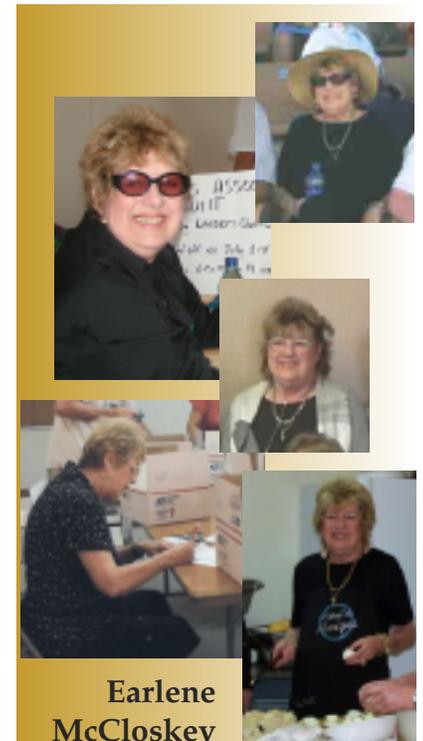
Scenic 247 means increased tourism, increased revenues for the County of San Bernardino and the State of California.

Industrial-scale renewable energy development means loss of tourism, and loss of present and future tax revenues.

The County and California need revitalizing, not further depression, not ghost towns. Promises of added jobs from the energy developers have not materialized; instead we have witnessed the destruction of the desert and of property values.

**W**e urge the Desert Advisory Council to advise the Bureau of Land Management to manage our public lands for the benefit of the public.

We urge the BLM to remember that if it is given over for the profit of private industry, what they will do cannot be undone.



**Earlene McCloskey**  
 served as President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the YMIA. For 15 years she was Treasurer of HVCC, only resigning when her failing health limited her activities.

Earlene was the Fund Raiser for both YMIA and HVCC and planned and organized wonderful events for both groups.

Pictures from HVCC Newsletters show her at the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day; working at HVCC packing parties for care packages for Marine units in Afghanistan; at the presentation to HVCC of the Marine flag that flew in Afghanistan over one of our sponsored units; and of course, smiling at yet another successful HVCC fundraiser.

Earlene lost her stand against cancer on August 20th.

Yucca Mesa, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Johnson Valley lost a staunch community volunteer.