

## Speaking with State Senator's Field Rep and County Supervisor

On Monday, July 20, Jim Schooler accepted the invitation to come to the HVCC monthly meeting in Flamingo Heights.

He is Field Representative for State Senator Jean Fuller, based in the District Office recently opened in the Bob Dunn State Farm building in Yucca Valley.

Fuller's Senate District 16 has 934,000 constituents who live in rural San Bernardino, Kern and Tulare Counties. This is the same population as in each of the other districts, but spread over a much greater area. Fuller serves until her term limit in November 2018. The District Field Office opened to improve communications with this end of the district. The rapid movement of legislation into and out of committees and between the Assembly and the Senate makes it difficult to keep constituents informed about all the activity.

Concerning the Fire Tax: To find out about the SRA Fire Prevention Fee, property and other taxes, Schooler advised checking the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association website ([www.hjta.org](http://www.hjta.org)), best monitor of state taxing efforts.

Guests and Council discussed increased gasoline prices and Edison rates and people leaving the state; problems with the Caltrans work on Hwy 247; the history of the County refusing building permits for properties relying on hauled water although water haulers are licensed by the State; the lack of progress on the Scenic 247 campaign.

Schooler heard about Homestead Valley grass roots opposition to industrial renewable energy development in the desert, and lack of sufficient notification to desert neighbors and others affected. HVCC has joined coalitions of local organizations and citizens opposing several industrial solar and wind projects. One of the major complaints has been stealth applications.

Schooler agreed to be a regular on the HVCC agenda. He returned August 17 to the meeting at Yucca Mesa, and offered help where needed on Scenic 247 and hauled water. He announced that Senator Fuller has been elected to be the Senate Minority Leader.

Jim Schooler's office hours: 9:00 a.m.-noon  
 Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday  
 7248 Joshua Lane, Suite B, Yucca Valley  
 Call 760-228-3136



In spite of heat and vacations over 30 people were on hand to hear Supervisor James Ramos' report from the Board of Supervisors to the August 17 HVCC meeting at the Yucca Mesa Community Center.

Among the many topics he covered were:

- County budget for this fiscal year: 5.2 billion dollars, balanced, and with 14% reserve in unrestricted funds for the first time in over 10 years.
- Among pilot programs supported is the Rapid Response helicopter being used by County Fire and Sheriff's Departments in partnership for transport of traffic or other emergency victims from remote areas.
- He says the desert has strong voice now. Ramos is Chairman and 2nd District Supervisor Robert Lovingood is vice-chair. The Board knows if something comes up that affects the desert they are going to speak on it, make sure resources come our way.
- One example: Code Enforcement now has funding for clean-ups and to be proactive to catch those dumping trash and prosecute. Next Community Clean-up events: Yucca Mesa on October 10, Johnson Valley on October 17 and Flamingo Heights on November 7. Landers to be scheduled in late February.
- Ramos reported a constituent was recently refused a permit to build a house because she relies on hauled water; his staff is working with her through the system, and if necessary he will bring it back to the Supervisors for a policy change or advocate for policy change at the state level.
- He urged use of the video conference center in Joshua Tree, our opportunity to comment at meetings without having to travel to San Bernardino. Supervisors are able to see what's going on and the engagement here.
- The County's Solar Ordinance championed by Ramos and Lovingood has been challenged unsuccessfully; projects that did not fit the ordinance, such as the Bowman Solar Application in Landers, were defeated.
- Ramos has sent a letter to Caltrans for the next step in achieving Scenic Highway status for Hwy 247.
- Opening of the Dumosa Senior Center in Yucca Valley.



Comments from audience members included lamenting illegal dumping of tires and trash, solving the problems of tire recycling, disposing of tires with rims collected by the Friends of Giant Rock OHV Club.

The financial advantages to the County of lifting the unwritten ban on hauled water was pointed out and Ramos agreed.



PHOTOS BY BARBARA HARRIS