

# Antelope Valley Blooms With Various Projects

BY DEL SCHRADER

When Padre Francis Garces crossed the Antelope Valley in 1776 he recorded in his diary that "the land seems to be very rich around the water holes." But the first white man to view the region did not know about the vast amount of underground water throughout much of the valley.

Although prospectors found small strikes of gold in the valley following the discovery of gold in Coloma in 1848 and freight wagons and stagecoaches rumbled through the area, little importance was attached to the Antelope Valley until 1876 when the railroad connecting Los Angeles with San Francisco was completed.

Today the air age has created an unprecedented boom in four Antelope Valley towns—Palmdale, Lancaster, Rosamond and Mojave. The region is fast becoming the jet-plane testing center for the Western States.

## Large Projects

Lockheed has built a \$400,000 hangar at Palmdale Air Field and a \$1,500,000 assembly line plant is scheduled. A master plan, subject to final approval by the Air Force, calls for expenditure of an estimated \$20,000,000 in the next year and a half. By the end of next year, plant officials anticipate employment for 3600.

Northrop and North American plants are also scheduled to be built in the valley.

Home building is keeping pace with industrial expansion and builders forecast a minimum of 2000 homes will be built in Lancaster, Palmdale, Rosamond and Mojave in 1953.

At Edwards Air Base, 30 miles northeast of Lancaster, jet expansion is going forward. More than 500 rental units are in various stages of completion, bringing the total to more than 1000 housing units for military and civilian personnel.

## Home Building

First large-scale community developer in the Antelope Valley was K. Sande Senness of Los Angeles, who started the 235-home Park View Manor development in Lancaster in August of 1951.

Other builders-developers in the valley, mostly from Los Angeles, include Lawrence B. Gibbs in Palmdale; Joe Hunt in Palmdale; Federal Builders in Lancaster and Palmdale; Cornelius, Jones & Phillips in Palmdale and Sponseller & Sons, Milton Kaufman, Ben Deane and Hadley-Cherry.

Statistics tell the story of business expansion in Lancaster, 75 miles north of Los Angeles on U.S. Highway 6 and the northernmost Los Angeles County community. Bank deposits have soared from \$2,887,000

in 1942 to \$13,000,000 at present. There are no vacant stores and 138 business firms and 32 professional offices are located there.

Lancaster is the trade and distribution center for approximately 4000 square miles and a shopping center for an estimated 55,000 persons. Unincorporated, the community now covers nine square miles.

Business construction scheduled in this critical defense area town includes a bank, two chain-store buildings, a supermarket, a new Southern California Edison Co. building and a new telephone building.

Building permits in Lancaster have climbed from a valuation of \$182,000 in 1941 to \$5,549,560 in 1951. Bus travel in and out of town is up 400% in four years. Urban land prices have soared 500-1000% in three years, while residential prices have climbed 300-500%.

Both Palmdale and Lancaster now have full-time Chamber of Commerce secretaries to handle increased interest in the Antelope Valley boom.

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