

Antelope Valley Boom Predicted at Meeting

Population Growth to 250,000 Forecast in Eight Years by Progress Assn. Chief

BY RAY HEBERT, Times Urban Plans Editor

Things are humming in the support it gives to Antelope Valley. small businesses in adjoining communities.

More than 300 Southern California businessmen were so informed Wednesday at an area development meeting pointing up the renewed activity — from population growth to economic expansion — under way in the north Los Angeles - east Kern counties area.

"Forget that ballyhoo about our lack of water," said R. B. McNutt, president of the Antelope Valley Progress Assn. "It just isn't so. We have a population of 86,670 now and it will stand at 250,000 in just eight years."

Rebuttal to Report

He told the association-sponsored luncheon at the Biltmore that the area is "bound to become a spectacular center of population growth and industrial development."

McNutt made no direct reference to it, but his remarks may have been fashioned as a rebuttal to certain statements — disheartening to Antelope Valley — which were contained in the Southern California Research Council's recent report on the Inland Empire.

This report referred to the "spillover myth." It said some inland regions, like Antelope Valley, will expand population-wise in the next 20 years but will not feel a "massive" spillover from Southern California's metropolitan areas.

Others Back Him

But other speakers, representing the military, public agencies and private interests, backed up McNutt's optimistic outlook at Wednesday's meeting. They summed up their views this way:

Water—Herbert Howlett, district engineer for the State Department of Water Resources, said the agency has found that Antelope Valley has the potential for population and economic growth if it receives supplemental supplies of water.

Military — Brig. Gen. Irving Branch, Commander, Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards Air Force Base, described the base as a future space center. It ranks now, he explained, as the nation's leading military installation

Freeways—E. T. Telford, assistant state highway engineer, set October, 1963, as the date for completion of the first 16-mile stretch of the Antelope Valley Freeway. By 1967, he said, the state expects to let contracts for the freeway's last link to the northernmost Los Angeles County line.

Public Works—Cass Griffin, superintendent, Los Angeles County Building Department, said the county's current Antelope Valley land acquisition and construction program amounts to \$10 million. Projects accounting for nearly \$4 million of the total are under way or scheduled to start this year, among them the partly - completed Antelope Valley Administrative Center.

Aviation—Joseph H. Tippets, assistant administrator, western region, Federal Aviation Agency, reminded the meeting that Antelope Valley will take on a new importance when the FAA moves into its air traffic control center at Palmdale. All air space from Phoenix to midway between here and Honolulu and from the Mexican border to San Francisco will be regulated from the center.

Railroads — V. L. Arenth, traffic manager, Southern Pacific, reviewed the line's plans for a 48-mile length of track — from Palmdale to Cajon Pass — which will permit through trains to cut across the Antelope Valley, thereby by-passing the Los Angeles Metropolitan area.

Industry — Paul Miller, project engineer, American Potash and Chemical Co., reported that his firm has purchased 2,000 acres near Mojave as the site for a general industrial development. The first unit will produce titanium dioxide for use in the manufacture of paint, paper, rubber and other materials.

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