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CHAPARRAL GUIDE

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**TRUTH or
CONSEQUENCES**

Hot Springs (TorC) Bloomed As Hillsboro Faded; County Seat Moved Where Action Was

By Charles Kreher
Former Herald Editor

The county seat, in the local American government tradition, is always at the center of activity; the place where the hustle and the bustle of a commercial or farming area, takes on a little more meaning.

And so it was that Hillsboro (Hillsborough, then) was selected as county seat of the hustling, bustling, mineral and mining-conscious Sierra County when it was formed in 1884 from parts of Dona Ana, Socorro and Grant counties. A towered and turreted, red-brick Victorian courthouse was erected there in 1892, adding to the majesty of the seat of government at a cost of about \$8,000, which at that time was a good, solid sum.

But time has a way of passing. The feverish activity of the Hillsboro-Kingston mining district slowed to a standstill, brought down by the repeal of the Sherman Silver Act of '93' which ended the government purchase of the bright metal yielded by the Black Range. And the plains were speedily being overgrazed so that the mammoth cattle ranchers in the county also were no longer a stanchion of the economy.

It was then that businessmen and investors and



Courthouse in Hillsboro 1892

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just-plain citizens, began looking for a new center of activity, away from now nearly isolated, once crowded and exciting Hillsboro.

They didn't have far to look. The far-seeing businessmen of Palomas Hot Springs Townsite Co., who were doing their best to funnel away the residents evacuating another once-busy community -Elephant Butte City, after the dam was completed in 1916- were out to see that their area, with its tourist-attracting mineral baths, would become the commercial and business center of the county.

"Why not move the county seat here?" they reasoned.

Talk and speculation and rumor increased, and by 1920 the first positive step was taken. Sam N. Matson and J. A. Bullen, Hot Springs businessmen, appeared before the county commission asking the commissioners to consider a petition asking that the county seat be moved "from its present site at Hillsboro to a site in Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences) and that an election be ordered and held at the time of the next general election on the second day of November, 1920."

With the petition was presented a warranty deed from Hilmer James to Sierra County by its board of commissioners for 10 lots in Hot Springs townsite.

Edward Tittman, county attorney, examined the deed and objected on the grounds that it was not made out to the proper party, patents to the lots had not been issued by the Central Land Office, it did not appear in the deed what the acreage of said lots may be and, according to the statement of Mr. Matson, the lots lie on the side of the hill away from the river and therefore were in an inconvenient place for use of the public. He also

HILLSBORO

Continued from Page 2

said a large number of names on the petition were not those of qualified voters and there were not enough names of qualified voters to call an election. However, the last objection was withdrawn and general discussion was entered into on the validity of the title.

The petition set forth that the undersigned comprised in number of equal to half of the votes cast in the preceding federal election, that the county has no public buildings, containing a court house and jail, original cost of construction was more than \$30,000, the present county seat is not situated on any railroad, the proposed new site is more than 20 miles distance from the present county seat, and that a deed accompany it for a tract of land in Hot Springs. Another requirement was that no previous vote had been called on substantially the same proposition for more than 10 years. It also said Hot Springs was within but a few miles of being the geographical center of the county.

At the meeting of Oct. 4, 1920, C. Phillips of Hot Springs presented the commissioners a warranty deed issued by Palomas Hot Springs Townsite Co. But during the discussion it was revealed that the county treasurer's books did not show any townsites in Palomas Hot Springs had ever had any taxes paid on them. An abstract man, a Mr. Rea was contacted, but he told commissioners he could not furnish an abstract on the land in time for their consideration. Hilmer James said he thought, if a site was needed to erect a courthouse in Hot Springs, a more appropriate site could be secured in case the lots in question did not prove desirable.

Commission members at that time were Emil James, J. S. Montoya and Tom Wedgewood.

On Oct. 15 the commission met again and passed a resolution calling the election for Dec. 2, rather than the November general election date.

The election was duly held and on Dec. 8 the commission met to canvass the results.

The vote tally showed Hot Springs, 908 votes, Hillsboro, 809. The only question was from Las Palomas precinct. There were two tally sheets, one showing Hot Springs, 100, Hillsboro, 6, the other Hot Springs, 99, Hillsboro, 6. Because the poll books showed a total of 105 votes in the precinct, both certificates were taken as correct. New commissioners who took office at that time were Joseph B. Badger, Tomas Rivera and Abran F. Chavez. Shortly thereafter Badger died and was replaced as commission chairman by George Disinger. As for the county seat change, that seemed to have been it. Aside from a resolution adopting the vote canvass, no other action was taken. The county seat remained in Hillsboro.

On June 29, 1922, Mayor Emil James offered an ordinance incorporating Hot Springs as a village and it was approved.

What ever views there might have been throughout the county in the succeeding years were not revealed in the minute books of the commission.



First Newspaper Located in Hillsboro

But on July 6, 1936 the matter surfaced again. This time the petition was presented by O. E. Overton, to commissioners E. M. Aragon, chairman, E. S. Thurmond and G. R. McGregor. The petition had a warranty deed attached. The commission heard the petition, then agreed to meet again July 30 to check the names on the petition with the registration books of the county.

On July 30 it was determined that, of the 1,683 persons signing, 1,496 were found to be genuine which was half the number of votes cast in the

preceding general election (2,277) and that the other provisions of the petition, similar to the one submitted 16 years earlier, applied; and that the question be placed on the general election ballot of Nov. 3, 1936. Commissioner Aragon and Thurmond voted in favor, Commissioner McGregor was absent.

Also on the general ballot that year were candidates to replace the late Sen. Bronson Cutting, who had died that year in a plane crash. The Re-

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HILLSBORO

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publican candidate was Jaffa Miller, the Democrat, Clyde Tingley.

The meeting of Nov. 9 was called to officially canvass the returns. This time the county seat move vote was Hot Springs, 2,012, Hillsboro, 572, or a majority of 1,447 favoring the move to Hot Springs.

The senate votes ran 1,599 to 980 for Hatch over Everly, 1,386 to 1,200 for Chavez over Otero. Tingley received 1,564 votes for governor against 1,045 for Miller. John Dempsey received 1,634 votes for Congress to 954 for Ralph Brown.

At the conclusion of the vote canvass it was ordered that the county seat be and hereby is removed from Hillsboro to the town of Hot Springs, is hereby designated and established as the legal and lawful county seat of Sierra County, and it appearing to the board of county commissioners that a convenient building had been obtained at such new county seat without cost to Sierra County, the same being the Goetz building on Lot No. 7 located on Block No. 97 on Main Street in the town of Hot Springs and is hereby established and designated as the courthouse...and henceforth the courts of Sierra County and the county clerk are herewith ordered to move into the said Goetz building and records and property of the office necessary for holding courts, and the Sheriff is ordered to remove all furniture and fixtures of the courtroom in Hillsboro to the Goetz building in Hot Springs.

The Goetz building was built and owned by Otto Goetz, pioneer businessman and early mayor in conjunction with his general store. The structure is now part of the Geronimo Springs Museum on Main Street.

It was also ordered by the commission as soon as a new courthouse and jail shall be completed in the town of Hot Springs, all county prisoners be removed to the town of Hot Springs.

A letter was introduced into the records from A. J. Burleson, mayor of Hot Springs and the town trustees, Dr. A. C. White, C. E. Henson, J. W. Knox and G. Almandoz granting the county, free of rent, use of the city administration building, situated on Main Street, until such time as the board of county commissioners at its discretion, sees fit to order or otherwise arrange for other quarters, or until a new courthouse and jail shall be completed.

A letter was also received from Dr. White, vice president of the Hot Springs National Bank, authorizing vice president James W. Knox to offer



Old Delivery Wagon Train from Hot Springs to Hillsboro

use of the rear part of their vault for temporary fireproof storage of county records.

The next meeting of the commission was on Jan. 4, 1937, although county clerk Marvin Richards had mistakenly dated 1936, but no mention was made in the minutes whether the session was held in Hillsboro or in the new temporary quarters in Hot Springs. New commissioners taking office were J. H. Hibler, chairman; E. M. Aragon and Ross M. Atkins.

The April 4, 1938 meeting was called to order in the Hillsboro courthouse (the minutes read) and a petition was introduced and a petition was presented signed by 200 electors to vote bonds in the sum of \$32,000 for construction of a court house and jail in Hot Springs. The election was called for May 3. At the next meeting, May 10, the canvass showed a 488 majority for the bonds.

During the following year, the commissioners approved a contract to have the buildings constructed by the WPA, or Works Progress Administration, public works area of the government. Kruger and Clark of Santa Fe were selected as architects.

Emergency meetings were also called to raise funds for furniture for the new courthouse.

On Aug 7, 1939 the commission resolved that since the county seat had been moved the old courthouse at Hillsboro was deemed to be of no further use or service as a courthouse and

that it should be sold. Bids were called for Sept. 4. When bids were opened on that day Burton Roach had bid \$357 and A. J. Howe had bid \$440. Both bids were tabled, whereupon Roach offered \$25 for the judge's bench and chair and it was ordered sold to him.

On Sept. 6 the commission awarded the bid to Howe for \$440 for sale of the courthouse and grounds.

(Howe tore down the old building, selling the materials for salvage.)

The county then found there had been a \$600 overrun on the \$32,000 cost of completing the new Hot Springs courthouse and the county clerk was authorized to go to Santa Fe to make arrangements with various state agencies to find the necessary funds.

On Oct. 2, 1939: "Mr. Hurley and Mr. Lamb, of the Chamber of Commerce, met with the commission for the purpose of trying to have the dedication of the new courthouse on the 21st day of October, and also to see if it were possible for the commission to spend as much as \$150 for the purpose of defraying the expenses of part of the dedication. After due consideration the commission agreed to put up this amount toward the purpose."

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Originally named "Hot Springs" and now called "Truth or Consequences," this city has received more national publicity via television and radio than any city of its size in the United States.

So naturally, one of the first things people who come here ask is, "How did the town get its name?"

In 1950, Hot Springs, New Mexico, was plodding along slowly and fairly comfortably, much the same as hundreds of other small resort cities. Tourist trade, practically speaking, was the city's only industry.

The majority of visitors here sought the town's health facilities and found the little community offered more for their money than they found almost anywhere else under the sun.

The cost of living was, and still is, extremely reasonable, and visitors and residents alike did, and still do, relax in the healing, naturally hot mineral baths, bask in the almost ever present sunshine, fill their lungs with the fresh, pure air that envelops this city and surrounding areas, fish a little, and play dominoes and shuffleboard at the Senior Citizens Recreation Center.

Another pastime years ago was sitting in groups on the sidewalk benches to watch the few travelers as they passed on the highway, usually without stopping. Recreation then was undeveloped to its full potential and the town was lost among hundreds of other "Hot Springs" scattered all over the United States; the name indicating nothing more significant than the likelihood that some hot springs were located in the area.

Then in 1950, NBC television and radio producer Ralph Edwards, on the 10th anniversary

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FIRST VISIT - Ralph Edwards (left) points to the newly erected welcome sign on South Broadway. With Edwards is his entourage who accompanied him to Hot Springs (TorC) for the first visit.

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HOT SPRINGS

Continued from Page 5

of the Truth or Consequences radio program, called his staff together and said, "I wish that some town in the United States liked and respected our show so much that it would like to change its name to 'Truth or Consequences.'"

On hearing the proposition, the New Mexico State Tourist Bureau relayed the news to the manager of the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce and the news spread like wildfire.

Here was an opportunity to advertise the city and its resources free of charge!

Better still, no longer was our city to be confused with that "other one" in Arkansas and the others throughout the nation (California alone has more than 30 towns called "Hot Springs").

So, in a special city election, 1,294 of the town's residents voted for the change to "Truth or Consequences."

On the other hand, 295 area residents opposed the change and a protest was filed, so the city returned to the polls and again voted - by a margin greater than four to one - to go ahead with the name change.

Almost 14 years later, in January 1964, the question went to the people again and they voted to keep the city's unique name.

A fourth election was held on August 18, 1967, and once more a majority voted to keep the name Truth or Consequences.

Ralph Edwards and his entire NBC production, acting and show crew came here in 1950, aired the first live, coast-to-coast broadcast of Truth or Consequences from the City of Truth or Consequences, and the residents of his adopted home are very pleased to say he came back every year (until his health prevented him from traveling) - with his Hollywood friends - to celebrate the anniversary of the name change, and to help spread the news about this oasis of hot springs.



HOLLYWOOD IN TORC - In 1958 Ralph and Barbara Edwards (left) chat with Peter Graves and Sue Chadwick as they exit the Continental airline plane that brought them to Truth or Consequences, NM.



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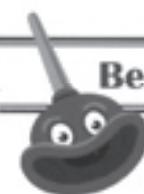
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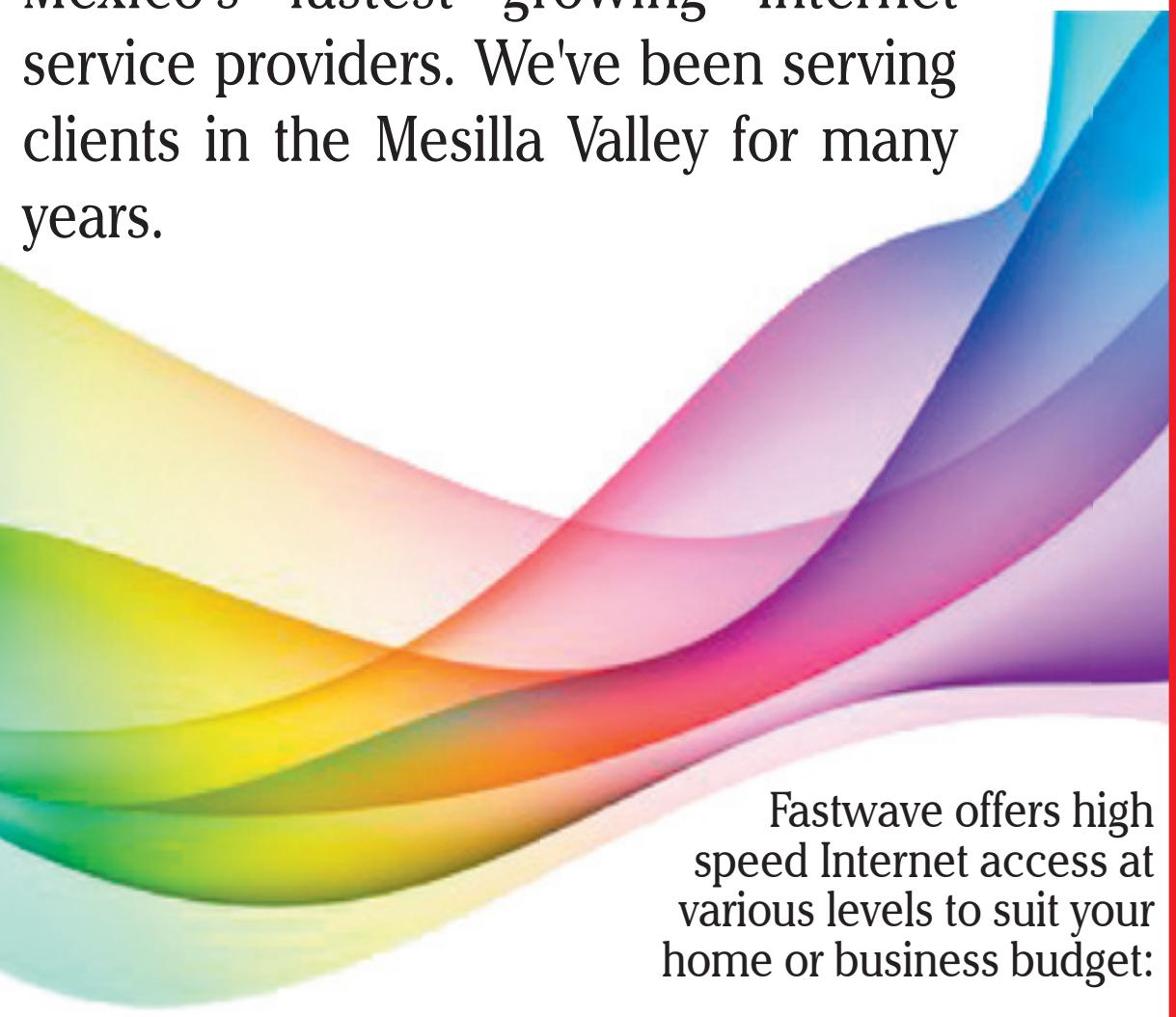
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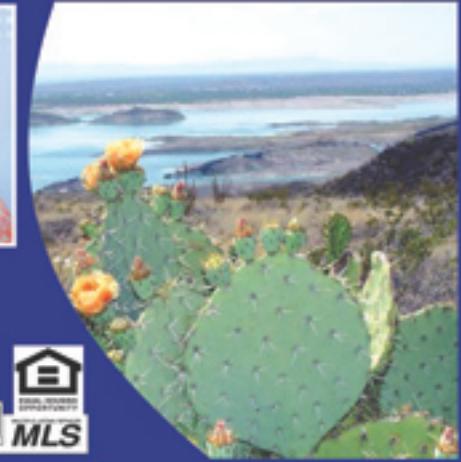
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104 Beach, Elephant Butte - Great lot in Unit 12. Close to lake/golf and restaurants. level, ready to build on. Priced to sell! Owner will consider seller financing. \$12,900. MLS #20142162.



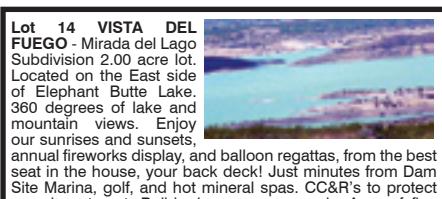
802 LOCUST - Rock Home, built in the 1940's 2 bedroom 1 bath, new metal roof, gas fire place, new laminated flooring, new Berber carpet, free standing gas fire place. Check out the huge laundry room. Lots of Charm, at the **Corner of Locust and Eighth**. Detached Garage, Alley Access, room for your RV. Call for appointment to view. \$69,000.00. MLS #20155238.



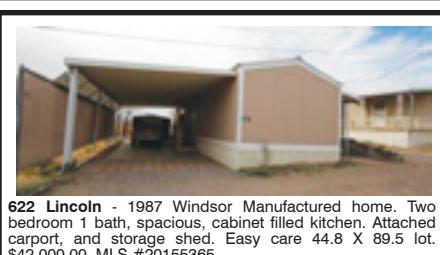
506 Travis St. - 1995 Fleetwood manufactured home is assessed as permanent. 2 bedroom, 2 bath, large kitchen. Great lake home, lots of room for all of your toys. Well maintained. Priced to sell. \$62,000. MLS#20153964.



10 Meritage
- Amazing lake views! 1.64 Ac lot. Custom cab & Onyx counter tops. Professional Frigidaire 6 burner gas range, glass front beverage fridge, Pantry .709 sq. ft. studio or rec. room or conference room with private entrance. Wood-burning fireplace. Pantry and laundry room with Bosch washer & dryer. 210 sq. ft. cov. patio facing the lake. Minutes to shopping, dining & entertainment, marinas and hot mineral bath spas. Close to Spaceport America. \$699,000. MLS #20151149.



Lot 14 VISTA DEL FUEGO - Mirada del Lago Subdivision 2.00 acre lot. Located on the East side of Elephant Butte Lake, 360 degrees of lake and mountain views. Enjoy our sunrises and sunsets, annual fireworks display, and balloon regattas, from the best seat in the house, your back deck! Just minutes from Dam Site Marina, golf, and hot mineral spas. CC&R's to protect your investment. Build when you are ready. Area of fine custom homes. Peaceful, serene location. High desert living at its finest! On the way to Spaceport America. 75,000. MLS # 20151555.



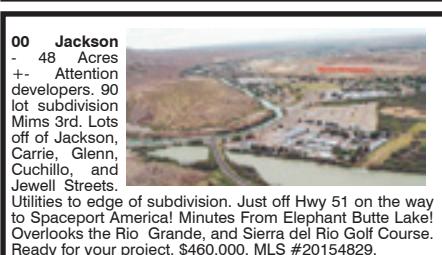
622 Lincoln - 1987 Windsor Manufactured home. Two bedroom 1 bath, spacious, cabinet filled kitchen. Attached carport, and storage shed. Easy care 44.8 X 89.5 lot. \$42,000.00. MLS #20155365.



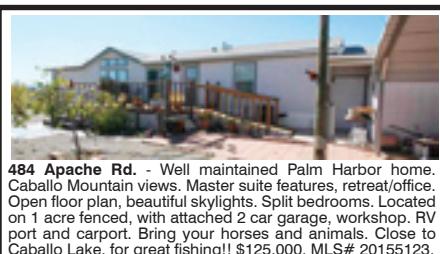
00 Old Ranch Road - ATTENTION DEVELOPERS 600 acres +- in Historic Monticello Canyon. 64.2 acres are in the Alamos Ranch Subdivision. 54 one acre lots. 36 of the lots are on hard surface roads, with underground electric and phone. The remaining land is range land. Tremendous potential. Beautiful Lake and Mountain Views. Just 4 miles East from I 25 exit 89. \$995,000. MLS# 20151280



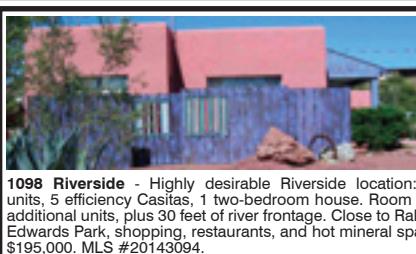
300 Underwood
- Beautiful custom home in Lakeshore Highlands. Fabulous lake and mountain views from the welcoming courtyard, to elegantly, you will love this well-appointed home. Kiva fireplace, high beamed ceilings compliment the living room. Wall of windows frame panoramic views of Elephant Butte lake. Breakfast bar, formal dining area, pantry, extra wall oven, upgraded appliances in the kitchen. Covered patio, outdoor fireplace & fountain. 1275 sq. ft. garage for all of your lake toys. \$459,900. MLS #20145502.



00 Jackson
- 48 Acres +- Attention developers. 90 lot subdivision Mims 3rd. Lots off of Jackson, Carrie, Glenn, Cuchillo, and Jewell Streets. Utilities to edge of subdivision. Just off Hwy 51 on the way to Spaceport America! Minutes From Elephant Butte Lake! Overlooks the Rio Grande, and Sierra del Rio Golf Course. Ready for your project. \$460,000. MLS #20154829.



484 Apache Rd. - Well maintained Palm Harbor home. Caballo Mountain views. Master suite features, retreat/office. Open floor plan, beautiful skylights. Split bedrooms. Located on 1 acre fenced, with attached 2 car garage, workshop. RV port and carport. Bring your horses and animals. Close to Caballo Lake, for great fishing!! \$125,000. MLS# 20155123.



1098 Riverside - Highly desirable Riverside location: 6 units, 5 efficiency Casitas, one two-bedroom house. Room for additional units, plus 30 feet of river frontage. Close to Ralph Edwards Park, shopping, restaurants, and hot mineral spas! \$195,000. MLS #20143094.



1301 Skyline Dr. - Beautiful home pride of ownership shows throughout this 3 bedroom, 3 bath home with 1196 sq.ft. attached garage. Plenty of room for all the lake toys, beautiful views of Elephant Butte Lake. Open living area with fireplace and large covered 300 sq.ft. deck. Attached carport, large 100X90 fenced lot. Home sells furnished, turn key ready to move in. \$239,900. MLS#20150031.



415 Lions Beach - 0.49 acre lot with great lake views. Lots of space for fun filled lake weekends. New homes going up in the neighborhood. Sunroom, family room, large dining area, and deck. Detached garage. Great Lot, Great Location. \$132,000. MLS#20151040.



543 Catfish - Lake home with lake views! 2 bedroom, 2 bath home on 0.36 acre lot. Large family kitchen, covered front porch. Finished 2 car garage, and room for your RV. All overlooking Elephant Butte Lake. \$139,900. MLS# 20131864.



1049 N Riverside - ON THE RIVER! 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 1700 sq. ft. plus home on the river. Beautifully customized 28 X 66 1995 Fleetwood Manufactured home custom oak cabinets, tile back splash, granite sink. Custom butcher block topped island. Jenaire appliances. Auto retracting pantry shelves. Bamboo flooring. Eat in kitchen, plus formal dining room. Large master bedroom with garden tub, dual sinks, separate shower, his and hers closets. Detached 27X13 garage. Large patio at the rivers edge, to take advantage of the view. Call Frank or Gretchen. \$165,000. MLS# 20153776.



9 Greer - Beautiful 2378 sq. ft. home, 4 bedroom, 2 bath cabinet filled custom kitchen, formal dining area, open living area. Covered patio features in-ground swim spa with new cover. Master suite offers RE-BATH walk in shower with 4 shower heads. French doors open onto the large covered patio. Beautiful 360° views. New A/C unit installed July of 2014. This is a must see with too many custom features to list. \$220,000. MLS #20152842.



401 Hawthorne Dr - 1998 Palm Harbor 32-80 Mfg. Home, with 1216 sq. ft. great room. Pool table stays. This well maintained home is a lake home deluxe. Master suite features private sitting/office area, jetted tub, huge walk in closet. 36X28 three car garage heated and cooled. 24X14 storage building. 1216 sq. ft. covered patio. Full RV hook up. (3) 30 amp service, (2) 50 amp service. Corner Lot, offers great access. \$295,000. MLS#20152493.



506 Catfish
- offers great lake and mountain views. This gracious home, opens to multiple shaded patios, with lush landscaping, providing the ultimate in outdoor living. Spacious living, dining room, centers around a warm, wood burning fireplace. Master suite, with large sitting area, opens to its own private deck. Huge walk in closet, was once a third bedroom. The detached garage is fully insulated. 20x25 detached boat garage, and an old ice house, is now a storage shed. Charming and unique. \$199,999. MLS #20125717.



47 El Nido - Beautiful custom home on 11.16 acres, overlooking the Palomas Valley. Fabulous kitchen, 4 bedroom, 3 bath home. Bring the horses, extensive pens. Private, secluded location. Mountain and valley views. \$395,000. MLS#20153969.



12 Pinto Trail - Pride of ownership show throughout this 3 bedroom, 2 bath home on 1.4 acres in prestigious Lakeshore Highlands. Plenty of room for all the lake toys in this detached 30X48 shop, with water, 220 Elect. compressor, 30 ft. work bench and loft. Enjoy the beautiful lake and mountain views from the covered front patio. Mature pine trees, this is an Oasis in the desert. Full RV Hook up. Lots of extras! \$215,000. MLS# 20153499.



400 Hawthorne - 3BR/2BA. 2662 sq.ft. home with beautiful lake views. Stunning vaulted ceilings, open living area with unobstructed views of Elephant Butte Lake. Large master bedroom offers his and hers walk in closets, Jetted tub and separate walk in shower. Large family room with pool table. 0.5 acre lot, plenty of room for all the lake toys. \$249,000. MLS#20152589.

Truth or Consequences / Sierra County Restaurant & Dining Guide

BAR-B-QUE
ON BROADWAY

Mon., Tues., Wed. 7am to 4pm
Thurs., Fri. 7am to 8pm
Sat. 7am to 4pm
Closed Sunday

308 Broadway
894-7047

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sierra del Rio

AT
TURTLEBACK MOUNTAIN RESORT

Entrance off Warm Springs Blvd.
Elephant Butte

- Great Golf!
- Great Food!
- Great Prices!

575.744.4653 (Golf)
575.744.7106 (Restaurant)

8

Carmen's Kitchen

Mexican/
American Food

Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

1806 S. Broadway

Open Mon. thru Fri. 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Sat. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Dine In or Carry Out

575.894.0006

10

The logo for Bella Luca Cafe Italiano. It features the word "BELLA LUCA" in large, bold, black, outlined letters. Below it, the words "Cafe Italiano" are written in a smaller, elegant, cursive script font.

