

CHAPARRAL GUIDE

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Sierra County's Economic Roots Found In Farming and Ranching

Sunshine, hot mineral baths, fishing and hunting and water sports attract the casual visitor to Sierra County, but it is ranching and farming which provides the basic economy of the county.

The county's population is distributed over 2,771,200 acres of land on some 420 farms and ranches. There are 8,880 acres of irrigated farmland, and 146 ranches raising livestock within Sierra County.

Completion of Elephant Butte Dam in 1916 and Caballo Dam in 1938 made possible farming on the present scale. Irrigation in this area dates back to the Spanish in the 17th century and production from this rich alluvial bottom land

hastened settlement by Americans after 1850. These early irrigation systems were limited to community ditches, which diverted the normal flow of the river without benefit of permanent diversion structures. Elephant Butte reservoir has a capacity of 346,000 acre feet of water. In addition to the reservoirs the system now consists of five diversion dams, 610 miles of diversion and distribution canals and laterals, 502 miles of land drains and waster ditches and six canal and drain structures across the Rio Grande. The project extends from Sierra County downstream through Dona Ana County and into El Paso County, Texas.

The million and a half acres of grazing land is divided up among some of the very largest ranches to the more modest spreads.

Ranching began on a commercial scale in the late 1860s and early 1870s, some of the larger operations at present being the Ladder Ranch and the former Diamond A ranch each covering 200 sections or more of land.

Chili has become a major crop for farmers in the Arrey and Derry area of Sierra County.

In line with the increased interest in the chili-flavored dishes, many of the producers have switched to the milder varieties of chili preferred by those who are not "natives" of the Southwest.

Processing plants have been developed in the Rio Grande Valley near Truth or Consequences, which use modern technology to move this distinctive product from the growing fields to the market.

Just as research has improved the quality of chili by developing new varieties, so have changes in processing, packaging, and storing chili resulting in a product that has a wide variety of uses and appeals to an expanding market.

Chili reaches the market in a variety of ways. Green fresh chili in southern New Mexico is ready to market by mid or late July and remains on the market shelves and roadside stands until frost comes in November. The season for fresh red chili is naturally shorter since the chili remains in the field longer than when picked green.

Chili has shown a very healthy growth as a New Mexico crop vegetable. Though it is a perennial in its native tropical habitat, chili grows as an annual in temperate zones and only under irrigation. That is one reason why the fertile Rio Grande Valley below Truth or Consequences has become the "Chili Capital" of New Mexico.

ARREY

Arrey, a prominent farming community in Sierra County, was settled about 1890 when homesteading was introduced to the area.

The Elephant Butte Land and Cattle Company paid the people to build homes and clear the land. When the homesteads were "proved" the people deeded their land to the company. Thus, the first development of the area.

As others learned that the land could be homesteaded, the valley began filling up. Many of the families of today are descendents of those early Spanish settlers.

The settlers, by November 1892, had cleared enough land to farm, then worked together to build an irrigation system which consisted of a large ditch. The ditch brought water from the Rio Grande above Animas Creek. Corn and wheat were the crops that were raised in those days.

The area was called El Bonito until the post office was established in 1901 by Urbano Arrey. The community then became known as Arrey.

A mill was built by Edward Hopkins in 1904 three miles south of Arrey. Residents of the valley brought their wheat to the mill to be ground into flour.

Steady growth was noted as settlers continued to come to the valley in the later 1910s and the 1920s. The first school was built in 1904 consisting of one room. In 1912 a larger two room school was built, and in 1936, a five room school was completed in the present location of the Arrey School. The school is the last rural school in Sierra County.

In 1916 the Elephant Butte Dam was completed and irrigation district was formed. Percha Dam was built by the United States Reclamation Service in 1917. Caballo Dam was built from 1936 to 1938. In 1928 the community saw the construction of U. S. Highway 85.

More farmers moved into the area in the 1930s.

Today the Arrey area is one of the largest chili producing areas in southern Rio Grande Valley. Farming with the latest in mechanized equipment, farmers provide chili to a fast growing world-wide market.

See FARMING on Page C2



Farming & Ranching
Important to
Sierra County

FARMING

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CABALLO

The original community of Caballo is covered by water. The settlement began when John Gordon and his family came to the area in the spring of 1908 bringing livestock and homesteading.

The post office was established in 1916. In 1938 when the lake behind the Caballo Dam began to fill it covered the homes of earlier settlers. These families moved their homes to the foothills on the west side of the Rio Grande and went on to raise livestock. The community also had a school, later consolidated to TorC. The area on Animas Creek is lined with small farms with a number of the early settlers still actively engaged in farming and raising livestock.

Caballo State Park attracts thousands of visitors each year to enjoy boating, water skiing, fishing and camping.

The name Caballo was derived from the Sierra De Los Caballos Mountains, the Spanish word for Caballo, meaning horse. The mountains were named for the herds of wild horses found in the mountains, said to be descendants of the horses brought here in the 1540s by Coronado.

DERRY

Located in the Southern most area of Sierra County, is the community of Derry. Its sister community is Garfield located in Dona Ana County and was known as "Loma Parda" meaning Gray Mountain in Spanish.

Both communities were settled at the same time. The first settlers came with their cattle, horses, sheep and goats. The free range and the Homestead Act of 1862 brought the settlers to the area.

Later they started farming after getting together and constructing a rock and timber diversion dam to channel river water into a main ditch. The dam was located about three miles north of the present day Derry. Each landowner assisted in the maintenance according to the acreage he irrigated.

The arrangement served the early farmers until the United States Reclamation service built Elephant Butte Dam.

Wheat, corn, beans and pumpkins were the main crops grown at the time. It was 1926 before the first cotton was planted.

Indians were a problem to the early settler. However, as long as they were kept supplied with horses and sheep, the Indians remained friendly.

The first school was built in 1898; the first Catholic Church in 1904; and a post office was established in 1904 and the community took the name Derry. The name was selected because of a fellow soldier who had served with the U. S. Army with one of the land owners of Loma Parda.

Derry enjoyed a small mining boom in the 1920s when manganese and fluorspar was mined in the Caballo Mountains. The boom was short lived.

LAS PALOMAS

The community of Las Palomas was founded about 1863 or before. It is located about five miles south of Truth or Consequences.

The community sprang up with the establishment of one store. After the Indians left the area, a number of mines opened in the Caballo Mountains bringing people to the community which for a time boomed. Following the boom, people left for other parts of the county. A one-room school served as the educational institution for youngsters of the community. As the enrollment increased, a second room was added.

When the construction of Caballo Dam began the water rose and the people from Las Palomas had to flee their homes. The water was destroying their homes. Most of the residents moved to Hot Springs, while others moved across from Highway 85, which is known as Palomas Creek. While there are a few families residing in the original townsite of Las Palomas, most residents have farms on the Creek.

Chloride

Chloride, the scene of past and present mining activity, is approximately 42 miles from TorC. The community was founded when Harry Pye (a mule skinner) discovered silver near what was later to be known as Chloride.

Within six months the area grew from a tent camp to a full-fledged town. Not even the Apache Indians kept the newcomers away.

See COUNTY on Page C3



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COUNTY

Continued from Page 2

In the early 1880s, Chloride is reported to have had 500 residents. There were eight saloons, three general stores, three restaurants, two butcher shops, a newsstand, a lumber yard, an assay office, a boarding house, livery stable, post office, and the Pioneer Stage Line.

Cuchillo

The name of the small community of Cuchillo, approximately 20 miles northwest of TorC, is the Spanish word for "knife."

Cuchillo, a farming community, was founded about 1850. It was a stage stop where horses were changed and passengers allowed to rest. Often these stages had military escorts when Apaches were on the warpath.

Cutter

Cutter, 20 miles east of TorC, was a train stop for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in the early 1900s.

The railroad ran from Albuquerque to El Paso, Texas, and the name Cutter originated from the name of a railroad engineer. The town came into existence during the mining boom in the Caballo Mountains as Cutter was the main shipping point to get ore to the market.

At one time the population is said to have been 3,500. The Victoria Chief Mining Company was principal employer in the area and was responsible for the construction of a two-story hotel, a store, restaurant, Post Office, and the schoolhouse. The town diminished in the 1930s when mining was closed down.

Several ranches operate in the area, and today the only reminder of Cutter is a railroad signpost.

Engle

Engle, approximately 13 miles east of Truth or Consequences, was at one time an important shipping point for cattle.

A major railroad stop in the early days, Engle got its start in 1879, and is named for R.L. Engle,

a Santa Fe Railroad construction engineer.

The cattle drives were a familiar sight for many years until Sierra County ranchers started transporting their cattle by truck, and the shipping point at Engle faded from the scene.

Today, the Santa Fe railroad still is in existence with trains passing daily through the little community of four buildings, an old schoolhouse -- now a community meeting place -- and two houses. Engle is the headquarters for a large ranch owned by the Armendaris Corp., of Kansas City, Mo. Acreage in the area has been planted to vineyards by Europeans and wineries have been built.

North of Engle, the U.S. Navy maintains a Space surveillance station.

Until the 1940s, Highway 52 was open from Truth or Consequences to Tularosa, passing through Engle. The U.S. Army dosed the road from a point midway between Engle and the San Andres Mountains when White Sands Missile Range was established.

Gold Dust

Gold Dust, in the Hillsboro-area of Sierra County, was founded in the early 1920s by John Hanson, and the town site remained in operation until the late 1940s.

See COUNTY on Page 5



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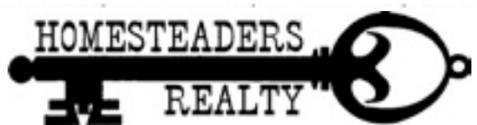


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COUNTY

Continued from Page 3

Hanson operated placer mining and gold washing facilities in the area. Today, nothing remains of early-day Gold Dust other than the original house belonging to Hanson.

The history of Gold Dust reveals that placer gold was discovered in April 1877 in Rattlesnake and Wicks gulches, which are considered a part of Copper Rat. During the years of 1877 and 1878, a miner named George Wells recovered \$90,000 in dust and nuggets from Wicks Gulch.

Hillsboro

The community of Hillsboro, approximately 32 miles west of Truth or Consequences, is located in the Black Range Mountains.

The community was established about 1877 during the boom days of silver and gold mining. During its heyday, Hillsboro produced \$6 million in silver and gold.

In 1884, Hillsboro became the county seat, and in 1892 an ornate three-story Sierra County Courthouse and jail were built. In 1938 the county seat was moved to Hot Springs and the courthouse was torn down.

Today, Hillsboro is a well-known community of retirees, artists, writers, ranchers, and miners.

Highway 152 (old NM 90) passes through Hillsboro and continues on through Kingston, San Lorenzo, Santa Rita, and Bayard to Silver City.

Kingston

The community of Kingston is located in the Black Range Mountains, approximately 9 miles west of Hillsboro.

The community was established during the rich silver strikes in 1882, boasting a population of 7,000 persons at one time. There were schools, hotels, a bank, a newspaper, and an opera house, where it is said Lillian Russell's troupes entertained.

Lake Valley

Lake Valley is known for the famous Bridal Chamber silver mines discovered in 1880, two

years after silver was first found in the area.

The Lake Valley, Hillsboro and Kingston State and Express Line advertised close connections with all trains to and from Lake Valley, which was served by a spur of the Santa Fe Railroad from Nutt to Dona Ana County.

Monticello

Monticello was settled in 1856. At that time, because of frequent Apache raids, the houses were built in a huge square forming a fortress for protection.

A natural gorge, dug through the mountains by flowing hot mineral waters from Ojo Caliente, is just above the community.

The town square of Monticello still stands and mass still celebrated in San Ignacio Church. Ranching is conducted in the area and some farming.

Placita

Placita is located 3 miles south of Monticello. The name Placita means "little plaza" in Spanish.

In the mid 1800s, ranches and farms made up the community, which is located on Alamosa River and some of the original adobe homes still stand in Placita today.

Winston

Winston, also known as Buena Vista and Fairview, is located approximately 40 miles west of TorC.

The town was established in the early 1800s when mining was going full-scale. The town continued to exist when ranching took the place of the big-scale mining operations. Starting out with the name Fairview, the name was changed to Winston in honor of a prominent citizen, Frank H. Winston.

Winston today is once again the scene of mining exploration. However, ranching remains the base of the economy for the area.

Williamsburg

Located adjacent to the City of TorC is the Village of Williamsburg, an incorporated municipality.

Williamsburg provides services to travelers on Interstate 25, located adjacent to the south interchange into TorC. There are a number of service stations, one motel, trailer parks, mobile home parks, antique dealers, and a Post Office in the village.

A Guide to Rock Hunting & Hiking in the Desert

If you are planning to rock hunt or hike in the desert, it is advisable to take the following precautions and possibly consider the following.

Wear a wide-brimmed hat and wear a long-sleeved shirt, especially if you are unaccustomed to the desert sun. In New Mexico's high elevation, the burning power of the sun is much greater than it is at sea level. Sturdy shoes and long trousers are essential items of clothing for a romp in the desert as well.

Before starting out on your desert trip, check the weather forecast. The Southwest desert is infamous for flash floods, particularly during summer afternoons when thunderstorms are common. If you're out and it does start to rain, stay away from arroyos – those funny, little, dried-out stream bed looking things – as they are where the water runs because the desert cannot soak it up as fast as it falls on the surface.

When collecting rocks, be careful when picking them up – scorpions and snakes enjoy resting in their shade. It is advisable to first kick over the rock to allow any such little friends an opportunity to find other shade.

In addition, it is a wise hiker, camper or whatever who informs their family or friends of their plans, including anticipated time of return, hiking route and other, similar information before taking out to the desert.

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SIDE TRIPS ON THE GERONIMO TRAIL

There are many interesting things to see along the Geronimo Trail in Sierra County. A side trip to Engle takes visitors to the remains of the old railroad town, once a bustling shipping center of over 2,000 people that now has four buildings left. The Jornada del Muerto portion of the Camino Real del Tierra Adentro passed through here, and now Spaceport America is being constructed to the south.

Elephant Butte Lake, at the time of construction (1911 - 1916) was the largest man-made impounded body of water in the United States. It was built for flood control and irrigation purposes, and provides water for farm lands along the Rio Grande valley in New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. It is the only body of water under international boundary regulations. Elephant Butte Lake State Park is now the most popular state park in New Mexico, with an abundance of water sports available.

A trip along NM 52 will take you to interesting places like Cuchillo, Winston and Chloride. These historic old towns have many tales to tell, having once been a place where stage coaches stopped and mining towns boomed, which led in due course to saloon brawls and shoot-outs. The Pioneer Store Museum in Chloride is well worth a visit, looking much as it did when it closed as a general mercantile store in the 1920s.

Continuing on the pavement, take NM 59 all the way to the Beaverhead Forest Service work station, through tall pines and over the Continental Divide. Check with the Forest Service office on road conditions during the winter, as roads can become snow packed and impassible.

South of Truth or Consequences along NM 187, the drive takes you to Caballo Lake and then the farming communities along the river valley. Travelers along this picturesque route will see irrigated fields of onions, chili, sorghum,

and other seasonal crops as well as many pecan orchards.

NM 152 will lead you into the Black Range Mountains and the mining towns of Hillsboro and Kingston. South of Hillsboro is the ghost town of Lake Valley, where the BLM has caretakers protecting the property. These towns were all major communities in the mining boom days of the 1880s and 1890s. Lake Valley had the richest vein of silver ever discovered. Hillsboro was the first county seat of Sierra County and the ruins of the original courthouse are still standing. At the height of the silver boom, Kingston was the largest city in the State of New Mexico, with a population of over 7,000 people during the mid-1890s.

Past Kingston is one of the most challenging and scenic drives in the world: Highway 152 twists and turns as it climbs more than 4,000 feet in nine miles. The view from the summit, Emory Pass Vista, is incomparable on a clear day, where the view shed is over 50 miles looking back toward Caballo Lake and the Caballo Mountains. If the weather is clear and you know where to look, you can see Elephant Butte Dam.

If you are in the area long enough and want to venture further afield, there are many other excursions you can take. The Camino Real International Heritage Center is between Truth or Consequences and Socorro, Fort Craig ruins are nearby, and the Bosque del Apache wildlife refuge is a must-see for birdwatchers during the winter. West of Magdalena, the Very Large Array radio telescope communicates with outer space, and has been used as a location site in several movies. To the west, the Gila Cliff Dwellings give you an insight into the life of the prehistoric people who lived in the mountains and farmed the valleys, raising corn, beans and squash. Between Hatch and Las Cruces are the ruins of Fort Selden, another site with

interesting historic tidbits. East of Las Cruces, the White Sands National Monument has miles and miles of gypsum dunes that you can drive through. This also has been used as a location site in movies.

Southwestern New Mexico is truly an enchanted part of the state.

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<p>18 Paint Trail, EB - Fabulous Horse Property. Beautiful custom pueblo style home. 3 bedroom 2 bath granite counters, stainless steel appliances, wet bar deluxe, jetted tub, tiled showers, large walk in closet. Located in Lakeshore Highlands on 1.463 Acres. Beautiful lake and mountain views. 4 car attached garage is 1076 sq. ft. Plus 30 x 35 shop with 220 volt elect, skylights and more. Tack room, pens, and pipe fencing. Large wrap around covered patio, for entertaining. Separate fenced yard for the pets. \$359,000. MLS #20170147.</p>	<p>212 Country Club, EB - Beautiful Lake views. BLM on South side for unobstructed views. 2 bedroom, 2 bath home plus Quest Casita, with 3/4 bath, beautiful Mohawk laminate flooring. Tiled kitchen and baths. Top of the line appliances remain. Corian counters, covered patio with fantastic outdoor kitchen. Outdoor fireplace, with seating area. Immaculate showcase home. Plus! Detached 30 X 30 garage, insulated, 220 amps. This lot is zoned commercial offering you additional possibilities, with its 40X40 shop, garage insulated, with 220 amp. RV Parking. \$315,000. MLS #20170379.</p>
<p>108 N. Arrowhead - 2 bedroom 2 bath 16 X 60 1996 Fleetwood manufactured home. Deactivated title, on permanent foundation. Out standing Mountain views. Detached carport, RV hookups. Close to Hot Mineral spas, and shopping. \$59,000. MLS #20164944.</p>	<p>712 Olivo - 2 bedroom, 1 bath, on quiet street, in Williamsburg. Furniture is negotiable. Large storage building. Large eat in kitchen. Great weekender, or starter home. MLS #20165892. \$71,000.</p>
<p>307 Rock Canyon Rd - 5000 sq.ft. building, with large auditorium, large kitchen, offices, and play room. Handicap Bathrooms. Lots of possibilities. High visibility location. \$280,000. MLS #20170652.</p>	<p>209 Kiowa Loop - 2432 sq. ft. 4 bedroom 1998 Oak Creek manufactured home, on spacious lot. Assessed as real property. Living room with fireplace, large family room, eat in kitchen and formal dining room. Master suite, offers parents retreat, large master bath with garden tub and walk in shower. Large covered back patio. Room, for all you lake toys. Well maintained, a great family home. MLS #20165603. \$139,000.</p>
<p>603 Hawthorne Dr. - 20164772 - Pride of Ownership! Beautifully maintained home. Outstanding from the enclosed front courtyard, to the covered back patio, overlooking a fabulous yard. 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, jetted tub, separate shower. Living room with fireplace to warm you on cool nights. Formal dining room, and large eat in kitchen with ample storage. \$199,500.</p>	<p>920 N Foch - This home is BEAUTIFUL and has been kept in impeccable condition. Fantastic location right close to schools, hospital and shopping. Nice size bedrooms and space to move with an enclosed bonus patio area that is heated and cooled and large TV Family room. Great fenced back yard and a large 2 car garage with work area and storage. It is move in ready! Come see it! \$199,000. MLS #20170182</p>
<p>1301 Skyline Beautiful home pride of ownership shows through out 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. New Block fence and electric gate being installed. \$250,000. MLS #20170638.</p>	<p>512 Van Patten - in the Historic Hot Water District. Hot Mineral well, # HS 01036. 1982 Manufactured home, assessed as permanent. Spacious 3 bedroom, with carport and detached 24 x 29 garage. Enjoy quiet soaks in your private covered Hot Mineral spa. Fully fenced yard. Lots of Storage. Close to downtown and shopping. \$80,000. MLS #20170330.</p>
<p>905 Juniper - Check out this 3 Bedroom 2 Bath home located in a quite neighborhood in the country heights subdivision, features refrigerated A/C, 2 car garage, large utility room, and easy to maintain xeriscape landscaping. \$110,000. MLS #20170167.</p>	<p>801 Maple - 4 Bedroom, fresh paint, new carpet. Ready to go. Fenced Yard, corner lot. Just minutes from Sierra Vista Hospital. 1997 Oakwood Manufactured home. 16X80 Owner Agent. \$64,900.00. MLS #20162489.</p>
<p>823 Ivy 20164590 Recently remodeled, beautiful 2 bedroom one bath, saltillo tile floors, carved wooden columns between living room and eat-in kitchen. Low e windows, custom blinds and ceiling fans. Tile counter tops. Single car detached garage with loads of storage. You will love the very private patio, and new privacy fencing. A delight to show. \$94,000.</p>	<p>MLS 20163354 -714 Kopra - 3 BD / 1 BA, older home right next to a small family park. Need some work but lots of potential. Large fenced yard with garage/workshop in the back off the ally You can own a home at the price you are paying for rent! \$59,000.</p>