

# ***NEWS***

*From the Office of*

## **Brad Mitzelfelt**

Supervisor, First District  
San Bernardino County

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### **County Assumes Ownership of Victor Valley Museum & Art Gallery**

SAN BERNARDINO – In a move that assures the continued operation of a High Desert cultural and educational institution, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today accepted ownership and control of the Victor Valley Museum and Art Gallery in Apple Valley.

“I want to commend all of the volunteers, cities and corporations who have built the Victor Valley Museum and Art Gallery into a vibrant and important institution in the Victor Valley during the past three decades,” said First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, who asked the Board to join him in accepting the museum. “In the current economic climate, it became impossible for the museum to meet its obligations, and I was relieved when they approached my office and offered to convey the museum to County ownership.”

The Victor Valley Museum had its origins in 1976 when local memorabilia and artifacts were gathered and displayed in various public buildings in the High Desert region for the nation’s bicentennial celebration. Several individuals and community service groups expanded on this grass-roots effort and in 1987, Jess Ranch granted approximately four acres to the newly formed Victor Valley Museum Association. By 1993, the Association had constructed the 13,080-square-foot Victor Valley Museum in the Town of Apple Valley.

With a decline in fundraising revenues, the museum faced the possibility of closing its doors. In July, members of the Victor Valley Museum Association approached Supervisor Mitzelfelt with a proposal to convey the museum to the County.

The memorabilia and artifacts will be catalogued and the building renovated. New displays and exhibits will be developed along with new outreach and educational programs in order to bring the museum up to the requirements of San Bernardino County Museum’s accreditation. The museum will be partially closed during that process, but the public will still have access to meeting rooms.

The one-time cost to accept the museum is estimated at \$192,953, and includes costs for staff, services and supplies, operating expenses and payment of liens, escrows and outstanding loans.

The County has received commitments from many financial supporters of the museum to continue their support. With contributions from businesses, residents and local jurisdictions, including \$15,000 from the Town of Apple Valley, along with fees for facility use and educational programs, the museum should be able to meet most of its ongoing obligations, with the County needing to contribute about \$39,000 from the general fund to make up the shortfall.