

## ***Breaking News***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Economic Study of Video Conferencing Capabilities in Joshua Tree County Office Requested**

Supervisor Ramos has requested the County Administrative Office conduct a study of the economic costs of establishing a video conferencing site in the Third District Joshua Tree office. The purpose of the study is to provide an analysis of the economic feasibility of providing such capabilities. The Board of Supervisors approved this request today at the Board Meeting.

A video conferencing system would allow residents of the Morongo Basin improved access to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and other County meetings. During Board meetings, residents would be able to participate in the public comment portions through the video conferencing system.

Residents of the Morongo Basin have already begun to express their support for a video conferencing site. "I want to thank Supervisor Ramos for moving quickly in his term to make County government more accessible to residents of the Morongo Basin," stated Rick Sayers, President of the Homestead valley Community Council.

Bob Dunn, local State Farm Insurance agent and active community leader, feels providing "video conferencing of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings locally is a huge step for the Morongo Basin. The technology aspect is great, but in terms of time and gas savings, it is such a positive step for Basin residents. Instead of a 2 hour drive, it's as close as the Supervisor's Joshua Tree office to get involved. It's been difficult being 75 miles away from the County governing body and now it will be easier for us to take part in the decision making process for this area. I hope interested Basin residents will attend meetings and be ready to share their concerns for this area."

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At the January 17<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission Board meeting, at least 70 residents from the Morongo Basin drove to San Bernardino to speak to the Commissioners. By utilizing video conferencing, residents would not have the financial burden of commuting into the Valley, the environmental impact would be lessened, and residents unable to commute would be able to express their views to their representatives.

“The residents of the Morongo Basin deserve to have their voices heard in San Bernardino County. A video conferencing center at the Joshua Tree office would provide greater access to their government, which these residents currently lack,” Supervisor Ramos has said.

The request calls for the research of the costs to be presented at the February 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Once the County Administrative Office provides this economic cost analysis, the Board of Supervisors will be able to determine the viability of moving forward with the project. Supervisor Ramos will continue to work with the County Administration to make this project a reality.

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