



# Catalyst

Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce Newsletter

We provide leadership and act as a catalyst in creating a vibrant economic environment that supports business growth and attracts people to visit and live in Borrego Springs



## Happenings

### Appreciation Breakfast — A Chance to Say Thanks!



Board President, Gwenn Marie welcomes guests. *Photo Courtesy of the Borrego Sun*

On March 2, nearly 50 chamber friends and supporters convened for the first annual Chamber Appreciation Breakfast. Our lovely location, the newly re-furnished Arches Restaurant at Borrego Springs Resort, gave us breathtaking views of a spectacular morning – a real “Chamber of Commerce kind of day.”

Board President Gwenn Marie welcomed guests saying, “Thanks to the very people in this room, we’ve made exceptional progress. We very much appreciate the support that made that possible.”

The kudos included Dr. and Mrs. Shelden, benefactors of our beautiful building; the Board of Directors; sponsors, patrons, and members of the Borrego Days Desert Festival committee; the 2005 Hot Shopping committee; the Borrego Business Think Tank; and County Supervisor Bill Horn, who awarded us a grant that made our 40th Annual Desert Festival the huge success that it was.

We welcomed Phil Rath, Supervisor Horn’s Policy Advisor, as our guest speaker on the topic “Winning at County Funding.” Phil gave an eye-opening talk, encouraging Borregans to become more active in seeking community grants for capital programs like parks, road and street enhancements, and landscaping improvements.

Phil was clear about what it takes to gain County support: “A strong, well-organized grassroots campaign is what you need. We want to hear about what Borregans want for their community.”

We hear you, Phil! Thanks to everyone who joined us for an uplifting morning. See you next year!



## People

### Chamber Ambassador Gayle Rae – 2005 Dori Holladay Award Recipient

We discovered the Dori Holladay Award plaque on a shelf about a year ago and wondered about it. It’s inscribed, “An Award of Gratitude and Recognition for Outstanding Service to the Community of Borrego Springs in honor of Dori Holladay.” Well that got our attention! But from the dates on the nameplates, it looked like there hadn’t been a recipient since 2000.

We knew the Appreciation Breakfast was the perfect time to re-instate the Award. And in a town blessed with number of great volunteers, we also knew an incredibly deserving candidate – Gayle Rae.

Gayle worked for Hughes Aircraft for 22-years throughout southern California and Mexico as a shipping & receiving inspector. When she and her husband, Dempsey, retired two years ago, they visited friends here, and decided right on the spot “this is the place.” It wasn’t long before both “retirees” decided they’d rather be working. Now Dempsey is the head chef at Borrego Springs Resort (and he’s a great chef!)

Fortunately for us, Gayle headed over to volunteer at the Visitors Center. She’s there 20 to 30 hours a week serving callers, tourists, and residents. “I love the variety of people I meet here,” Gayle says with her wonderful smile. “I learned how to talk to people from my father – he was a natural PR person!”

So is Gayle, with her welcoming and knowledgeable presence. Her sense of humor and great attitude keep us all going and delight visitors. She’s an enormous contributor to our work. Thank you, Gayle! And thank you, Dori Holladay, for being the inspiration that you are.



Chamber Ambassador Gayle Rae (right) accepts the 2005 Dori Holladay Award for outstanding volunteer service. *Photo Courtesy of the Borrego Sun*



## Join Us!

### Together, We're Better



From left, President Gwenn Marie, Vice President Alex Nagy, Treasurer Leo Buckley, Director Jack Cameron, Director Sarah Young. Not pictured: Directors Ben Nourse, Andy Macuga, and Cathy Gay Oswald

Our 2006 Membership Drive hasn't reached our goal yet, but our members have invested more than \$23,000 in dues so far this year. If you've renewed, we thank you for your membership. We call on all businesses to become chamber members to increase our ability to provide more and better services to visitors and members. We need the financial support and goodwill of our businesses and residents to do the work we do – represent, promote, and support Borrego Springs businesses.

We're equipping to communicate better in a digital age. We've invested in a new digital camera (thanks to a generous matching grant from Fred Jee) and digital design software. We're also set up to send targeted electronic marketing communications, and you can sign up for our e-newsletter on our home page at [www.borregospringschamber.com](http://www.borregospringschamber.com). We're working to upgrade the quality of our communications to better tell our story and attract financial and other support.

We're also focusing on key issues – like what's next for Borrego? With the guidance of our Borrego Business Think Tank sub-committee, we are studying ways to implement key improvement recommendations of the excellent County-commissioned study by Chandler, Brooks & Donahoe, completed in the fall of 2001. That report, known around town as "The Brooks Report," is a valuable tool in shaping discussions about intelligent growth for Borrego Springs with business and community leaders and Supervisor Horn's and County teams.

This is an issue that you will hear a lot more about from us in the future, so stay tuned for further developments.



## Board Inks Contract with Marie

### New Marketing & Communications Consultant

The Board of Directors has signed a contract with Gwenn Marie (also currently Board President) to provide marketing, communications, and fundraising consulting services. The \$3,000 monthly contract expires 12/31/06 and is cancelable without cause or penalty at any time, with 30-days notice.



Gwenn Marie, contracted marketing and communications consultant

In announcing the contract, Board Director Ben Nourse acknowledged that Marie's volunteer services in 2005 were behind the chamber's turnaround.

"We're very pleased to announce this agreement with Gwenn," says Nourse. "She brings energy and professionalism to our continuing efforts."

After spending more than a year and a thousand volunteer hours successfully benefiting the chamber, Marie told the board in November that she'd be interested in being a paid marketing and communications consultant. Agreeing to that idea, the Board engaged a San Diego law firm to help draw up the contract and ensure legality.

Concurrent with her contract, Marie will serve her term as President through December 31, 2006, and recuse herself from board decisions related to the consulting contract.

### Board of Directors

- Gwenn Marie, President
- Alex Nagy, Vice President
- Leo Buckley, Treasurer
- Ben Nourse, Director
- Andy Macuga, Director
- Jack Cameron, Director
- Sarah Young, Director
- Cathy Gay Oswald, Director
- Vacant, Secretary

### Staff

- Erica Savage, Program Director
- Kathy Pratt, Administrator
- Pat McArron, Webmaster

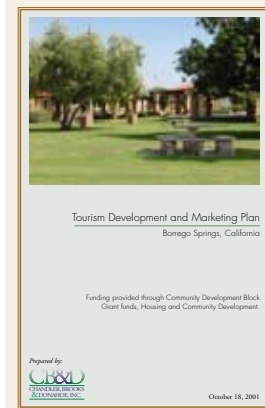
### Ambassadors

- |               |               |                |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gayle Rae     | Kay Sharkey   | Peggy Brown    |
| Faye Dorsey   | Pat Havens    | Jim Havens     |
| Ann White     | Arlene Oakes  | Starr Huchison |
| Sandi Granger | Dori Holladay |                |



## What's Next for Borrego? Pondering the Brooks Report

A working sub-committee chartered by the Board of Directors has been meeting monthly since November for open-ended conversations about development in Borrego Springs – and how citizens can influence thoughtful, intelligent development that respects our unique desert environment. Dubbed the Borrego Business Think Tank, members are Bill Wright, Jim Wermers, Mike Gotch, Dennis Nourse, Linda Carson, Mark Jorgensen, Betsy Knaak, and the chamber board.



The group aligned quickly around a central issue: improvement projects to enhance the appeal of our core business district. The platform for discussion became the 2001 report from community planning consultants, Chandler, Brooks & Donahue. The Think Tank finds their recommendations are sound strategies to vitalize our business district and enhance the appeal of our village.

The Think Tank is developing dialog with the Borrego Springs Sponsor Group on overlapping areas to determine how we could work together to increase County support. As we progress, the process will include a series of community in-put workshops and meetings so planning will accurately reflect the desires and viewpoints of village residents. It's a big conversation. Look for more information soon.



## Authentic California Nature Tours – Effort Could Attract New Visitors



Board president Gwenn Marie with Richard Cadieux, Managing Director of the Idyllwild Bureau of Tourism on a tour of the Palms at Indian Head property. *Photo courtesy of the Borrego Sun*

Tourism initiatives with Idyllwild continue. Board president and marketing & communications consultant Gwenn Marie is collaborating with Richard Cadieux, Managing Director of the Idyllwild Bureau of Tourism. The two have been exploring joining forces with neighbor Catalina Island to organize and promote “Authentic California Nature” tours for those seeking to experience California’s more natural ocean, mountain, and desert environments.

Cadieux believes the appeal of the three areas could be a draw in the burgeoning “eco-tourism” industry. Seven-, 14-, and 30-day tours would give visitors unique California travel opportunities into less-traveled destinations, which could be especially appealing to foreign tourists.

Marie and Cadieux plan to visit Catalina to meet with officials from the Santa Catalina Island Company, which manages tourism and marketing activities for the island, and the Catalina Chamber of Commerce.

We see an interesting opportunity here to participate and benefit from a unique tourist program like this. We'll keep you posted.

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**Annual Meeting**  
Join us for an update and discussion about  
chamber business and priorities.  
We want to hear your voice!

**Wednesday, May 10th**  
**4 - 5:30pm**  
**Borrego Springs Resort Meeting Room**



## Where are Those Signs, Anyway? Initial Plans Reveal Challenges

Last year at this time, we were moving ahead to fabricate and install new village entry signs. We had a concept, we had the cooperation of SDG&E to install the signs, and we even had the permits, in itself a huge victory. What happened?

A lot. As Board Director Jack Cameron researched fabrication, more and more questions arose. Could a suitable design be fabricated with old utility poles as structural elements? Who would guarantee that the design as rendered could actually withstand intense desert conditions – including fierce winds. When several engineers informally assessed the concept as “risky,” we thought it prudent to explore other options.

So the ad hoc sign committee (Gwenn Marie, Mayor Abby King, and Chamber Director Sarah Young) took a field trip and camera to neighboring desert communities to get a sense of their approach to town signs.

Of everything surveyed, the Palm Desert gateway sculptures captured our eye and interest the most. The sculptures, designed and installed by noted artist Michael Watling, a Pinyon resident, use native rock materials in memorable and distinctive treatments. Gwenn got in touch with Michael, and he paid us a visit in mid-February to show us his portfolio and talk about entry signs and the concept of “public art.”

That fascinating conversation has opened up further areas of inquiry. Should we install somewhat “ordinary” town signs soon, just to be done with it and keep costs down? Or should we take a stand for public art and commission and install real works of art by local artists as our village gateways? As we discuss and debate approaches, we recognize that the “town sign project” is definitely more complex than we expected.

More conversation to come!



## Phil Rath, Horn’s Policy Advisor – Meets with Chamber Representatives



Phil Rath, Supervisor Horn’s Policy Advisor, briefs us on winning County grant funds for community improvement projects. *Photo Courtesy of the Borrego Sun*

The Chamber’s Borrego Business Think Tank enjoyed an opportunity for in-depth conversations with Phil Rath, Horn’s Policy Advisor, at a dinner meeting on March 1.

“It was great to sit down in a comfortable environment with Phil and ask questions,” said Think Tank Member Dennis Nourse. “He helped us better understand the best ways to approach the County to support and fund town improvement initiatives.”

Rath encouraged the group to begin to articulate possible growth scenarios to gain the County’s assistance. He suggested that we consider getting County designation as a “custom zoning” area, like Fallbrook did. This kind of project is something the County can help us with. He recommends coming to the County with a proposal – and selling it. Rath acknowledges that community input and collaboration with our Sponsor Group would be key components.


Rath advises that we have a great opportunity to pick up the recommendations that the Brooks Report outlines. Such projects are the kind of public works that the County is prepared to support and possibly fund. “We need to see your vision,” Rath said. “We want to do what’s right, and we depend on Borregans to let us know what they want.”


We appreciate Phil’s visit, and especially the solid information he provided. Now it’s up to us to do something with it.

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## Rita Anderson, HomesOfTheDesert.com First Platinum Member

When our 2006 Membership Campaign brochure landed in her mailbox, Rita Andersen phoned immediately to become a Platinum Member – our very first. Rita’s like that – not one to miss opportunity.

“I don’t like to waste time,” Rita comments. “The chamber supports my business, and I support what our Chamber of Commerce is doing. I wanted to get on board right away.”



Rita Andersen of HomesOfTheDesert.com, our first Platinum Member

Rita’s been in the real estate business for more than 14 years, following a successful career based in San Diego as a field engineer for Danka office equipment. She launched her business, HomesOfTheDesert.com, four years ago. In choosing the name, she recognized the growing importance of Internet marketing and having a web presence.

Rita and her husband Ron have been Borrego Springs residents for 8 years. “We’ve seen a lot of change since we’ve lived here. Who knows what’s going to happen? I see slow, steady growth, but that may be impacted if housing prices start to go down. Borrego Springs has a lot going for it. With the first wave of baby-boomers turning 60 and looking for new beginnings, we could have a strong appeal, with continued growth especially in the second home market.”

Rita, a member of the Borrego Springs Real Estate Association, supports the chamber’s exploration of moving the 2001 Brooks Report recommendations into reality to improve the appeal of our business district. “I’m happy the chamber is taking leadership here,” Rita says. “As a realtor, I appreciate anything that enhances our town. But it all has to work together, and I think the chamber can help make good things happen.” Thanks, Rita! We truly appreciate your support.

**HomesOfTheDesert.com**  
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**Rita Andersen**  
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Notary Public  
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rita@homesofthedesert.com



## Spring Events – Artists in the Spotlight



From left: Breta Matson, Barbara Matson, Diana Cronhardt, Sheila Blandy, Beth Hart, Eva Crouthamel, Gloria Roseneau, Gwenn Marie, Delores Barrett, Sue Kerner, Jeanette Baker

The Artist reigned supreme here this spring, and we’re all more enriched as a result. With the Art Guild’s Art Fair, the Circle of Art, and drama and music at the Performing Arts Center, resident and visiting artists brought insight, inspiration, and vibrancy to our community.

The 31st Annual Art Fair turned The Center into a feast for eyes and spirit. At the invitation of Art Guild President, Gloria Rosenau, the chamber was pleased to participate in the official ribbon-cutting opening ceremony for the Matson Gallery (congratulations, Barbara and Breta!). We now boast six galleries in town!

Over at the Performing Arts Center, Director Austin Custodia, Musical Director Jennifer Goodenberger and a great cast opened “In the Beginning,” a whimsical and creatively staged musical. Our troupe of performing artists brings talent and dedication to the stage for our enjoyment and delight.

And March 25 – 26th, the 17th Annual Circle of Art attracted more than 70 artists presenting an impressive array of work, with the proceeds from the event benefiting BASIC, a local scholarship fund. There were many new artists this year, and returning artists expressed a sincere appreciation for Borrego Springs as a wonderful venue and artistic showcase.

We thank all of the artists who contribute beauty and depth to our lives. Embracing the arts is a natural extension of the scenic beauty, wonder, and diversity of our village in a park.

David Salk, world-renown Idyllwild potter, shows his work at the 17th Annual Circle of Art.





# The Perfect Spring Weekend Opportunity for Cross-Promotion

**THE PERFECT SPRING WEEKEND**  
March 24 - 26, 2006  
Borrego Springs, California

Golf, art, drama, learning, and a desert garden tour — all in one perfect location!

**GOLF**  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual Woolcott Memorial Golf Tournament  
Gala Dinner Party & Auction  
Friday, March 24  
There's nothing like 18 holes of golf on a beautiful spring day — especially when it benefits a great cause like the Borrego Medical Center! This fundraiser tournament and auction promises to be the cure for winter blahs. Call 760-767-5005 for an application. Then get ready for tee time! Registration begins at 7:30am. Show-up starts begins at 8:30am.

**ART**  
17<sup>th</sup> Annual Circle of Art, Juried Show and Sale  
Saturday & Sunday  
March 25 - 26  
Come browse and buy unique artwork in a spectacular outdoor setting. Five lucky visitors participating in our marketing survey will be selected to receive a signed 2006 poster, *Presado Jail Door*, by San Diego artist and photographer Jo Ann Ginepra. Prints will be available at the show.

**Drama**  
"In the Beginning," A Musical Comedy  
Borrego Springs Performing Arts Center  
Friday, March 24 & Saturday, March 25, 7:30pm  
Based on the book of Genesis, this musical helps us discover what really went on "behind the scenes" of the first five chapters of the Bible. It combines a more with comedy, meaning with laughter, tears with sweetness, and music that will lift you to your feet. It's a show as smart as it is full of hope! Tickets: \$15, available at Borrego Home Video, or call 760-767-4275.

**Learn**  
Traditional Pottery Making Workshop  
Anza-Borrego Institute  
March 25, 9am - 5pm March 26, 9am - 2:30pm  
Learn the traditional method of pottery making once common in southern California directly from Palpai artisans of Santa Catalina. The workshop will include clay gathering, forming, burnishing and firing pots. Each student will have the opportunity to make at least one pot. Space is limited. Members, \$100; Non-members, \$125. Visit [www.theabf.org](http://www.theabf.org) or call 760-767-4063 for more information.

**Garden**  
Annual Desert Garden Tour  
Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association  
Sunday, March 26, 9:30am - 4pm  
This self-paced tour of five private gardens will delight and amaze you. See artistic use of a small space, a wildlife sanctuary, a poolside cactus and citrus garden, and a desert church with special outdoor features. Tickets \$17 (non-members) and \$12 (members). For more information call 760-767-3098.

Escape the ordinary!  
Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce 443-203-4234 [www.borregospring.org](http://www.borregospring.org)

With a Community Project Grant from Supervisor Bill Horn, the chamber supported the 17th Annual Circle of Art event March 25 – 26 as our annual spring festival. We provided design and production for key marketing elements – an event postcard and a double-sided promotional flyer that appeared in 53,000 San Diego Union Tribunes on March 11.

As we developed plans for the weekend, we became aware that a number of events were scheduled for the same weekend – the production of "In the Beginning," at our Performing Arts Center, ABDNHA's very popular annual Desert Garden Tour, a fascinating traditional pottery making workshop at the Anza-Borrego Institute, and the Woolcott Golf Tournament and Gala Dinner, benefiting the Borrego Medical Center. Thus was born "The Perfect Spring Weekend!"

Thanks to our new digital design tools, Program Manager Erica Savage and marketing consultant Gwenn Marie created the flyer completely in-house – a huge cost advantage over expensive agency production fees paid in the past. Using artistic elements from this year's Circle of Art poster, one side of the flyer promotes the 17th Annual Circle of Art, and the other promotes "The Perfect Spring Weekend," and the activities taking place here.

We'll be looking for more marketing and communications projects like this one that help visitors (and residents, too) see all there is to do in and appreciate about Borrego Springs!



# "Some Like it Hot" Retailers Plan Summer Promotion

The chamber's Retail Committee is thinking ahead to summer and has requested marketing and communications support to develop a "Summer Survivor's Guide to Borrego Springs." The flyer will be a guide to the off-season hours for Borrego businesses.



"It's frustrating for customers in the off season," notes Retail Committee Chair Robin Halford. "Nobody knows exactly who's open or when. This guide will be enormously helpful for visitors and residents," she claims. The Retail Committee and chamber Ambassadors are currently researching the most up-to-date information.

The "Summer Survivor's Guide" will be the first piece in an overall summer marketing campaign – "Some Like it Hot" – that the chamber is developing for use on our website, print, and electronic newsletter projects.

Look for the Guide by mid-May and the inside scoop on what to expect this summer.

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## Member News

### Welcome New 2006 Members

Thank you for your Support!

- Borrego Springs Art Guild
- Borrego Springs Children's Center
- Borrego Springs Water District
- Desert Sky Properties
- The Frugal Coyote
- Garybaldy Translations
- Brian Giblin, State Farm Insurance
- Holiday Homes
- Juan's Tree Service
- Kelsay Investigations
- The Massage Lady
- Matson Gallery
- Ramona Home Journal / Julian Home Journal
- Rams Hill Accommodations
- Salvin Construction
- Santa Fe Palms
- Seley Ranch
- Sunset Realty
- Wade Concrete Construction



## People

### Kathy Pratt, Administrator

We are very pleased to announce that Kathy Pratt, a long-time Borrego resident and business owner, has joined our staff as part-time Administrator. Kathy assumes bookkeeping, accounting, and banking responsibilities. She's in the office Tuesdays and Thursdays.



"Kathy is an impressive professional with a great background," says Leo Buckley, Treasurer. "We feel very fortunate to have her support our bookkeeping and office operations."

Says Board President Gwenn Marie, "With Erica, Kathy, and our Ambassadors in the chamber office, we've got a real dream team, in my opinion."

Welcome aboard, Kathy! We invite members to stop by and say "Hi."



## Feedback Wanted

We hope you find this edition of Catalyst informative and helpful. Please send us feedback, story ideas, news items, and photos. We're a catalyst for business in Borrego. Thanks for joining forces with us!



## People

### Erica Savage, Program Director

After 18-months as the chamber's sole employee, Erica Savage has been promoted to Program Director, supported by our new Administrator, Kathy Pratt.

"Erica has done an amazing job at keeping everything afloat here," says President Gwenn Marie. "She's handled everything from routine administration and bookkeeping to relationships with members and sponsors. She's been doing a two-person job! We're pleased to give her an opportunity to grow her skills and expand her role here."

In her new role as Program Director, Erica will provide graphic design, photography, and production for chamber communications including newsletters, direct email, flyers, brochures and other projects. She will oversee our website content, ensuring it is current and fresh. Additionally, she will have more interaction with members to assist in providing relevant member services and is the key liaison for special chamber-supported events like Borrego Days, Circle of Art, and Cinco de Mayo.

Thanks for being such an outstanding contributor to the team, Erica!

## Borrego Days Planning Meetings

**Join us for the fun! Meetings are from 4 - 5:15pm at the Chamber. Please call for more information. Bring your ideas!**

- |          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| May 8    | September 11 |
| June 5   | October 2    |
| July 3   | October 16   |
| August 7 | November 6   |

**Dori Holladay, Festival Chair**



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## **Borrego Springs Cinco de Mayo Celebration**

**Saturday May 6, 2006**

**11am - 7pm**

**Christmas Circle Park**

- Mexican Folk Dancing
- Live Music — All day
- Kids Fun
- Prizes & Raffles
- Salsa Contest — Bring your best recipe for tasting
- Costume Contest for kids and adults — Dress your best!



**Come Join Us for the Fun!**