

OAKHURST RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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ORA Looks to the Future of Oakhurst

Oakhurst is growing and changing. Changes previously occurring only in urban areas are beginning to show up in the mountain community as well. While growth and change are inevitable, and not necessarily negative, the increasing speed of local change has caused residents to become concerned about the long-term future of their area. At the same time they are looking for ways to have greater input into the process through which such change will take place.

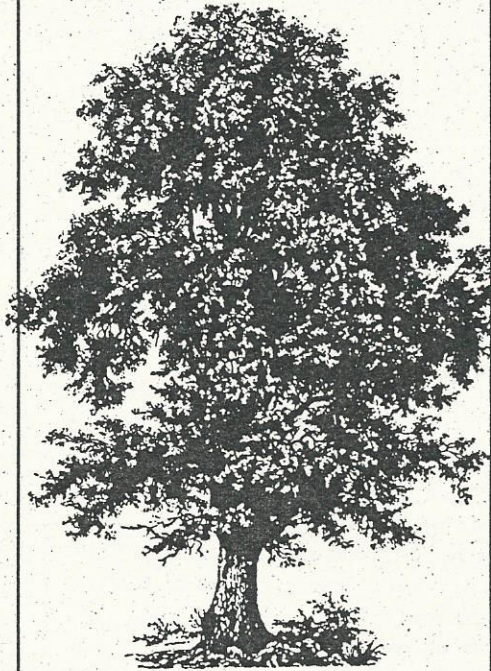
The Oakhurst Residents Association was formed to help address these concerns and to provide a voice for that large, but unorganized segment of the population whose concerns, until now, have been inadequately addressed.

While the proposal of an Indian gaming facility and the virtually unannounced arrival of SierraLand were immediate catalysts for the formation of ORA, they by no means represent the only concerns of the organization. Rather, ORA is focusing on the overall future direction of Oakhurst and the surrounding mountain area.

These are issues which affect everyone. Solutions must come from the entire community.

ORA is not "no growth," but rather is in favor of "responsible growth" - that amount and type of growth which is both compatible with the social and physical environment, and, more importantly, which is desired and consciously chosen by the area's residents.

Among the broad range of ORA's concerns are both commercial and residential planning, respect for and preservation of the environment, establishment of a strong and diversified economic base, increased educational and cultural opportunities, and the



maintenance of a strong sense of community.

These are issues which affect everyone, and therefore issues whose solutions must come from the entire community as well. We cannot do this alone, nor do we intend to work in opposition to other organizations already in place, but in concert with those who share similar goals.

ORA is not a partisan political organization. We do believe, however, that local, state and federal governmental representatives need to become and remain sensitive to the special needs and the unique qualities of this area. We have already taken positive action to that end with regard to the proposed Indian gaming casino, by asking local, state and federal policymakers to fully consider the specific social and environmental consequences of such a development in this particular area. From this follows the broader question of the most effective ways to ensure local control and accountability from those who represent us - an issue ORA will be exploring with the community in coming months.

Still, ORA is a relatively new organization, in its formative stages. We depend, above all, on local residents' support. Input from all segments of the population is essential. Expression of concerns, and solutions for prob-

lems must be shared in an ongoing community-wide dialogue. Active involvement in issues which will determine the kind of place Oakhurst will be in coming decades, is the glue which will hold us together.

Recent events have unintentionally served as a strong "wake-up call" for Oakhurst. The future is coming. We see it around us every day. It is up to us to decide NOW what part we want to play in shaping it. As individuals our influence is limited, but joined together we will be able to effect positive change. It is our community. It is our choice.

- READ THIS NEWSLETTER
- PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR
- TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE

CASINO PROPOSAL WAKES COMMUNITY

THE ISSUES

The recent proposal by the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians to locate a gaming facility somewhere in the greater Oakhurst area was one of the events which served to wake the mountain community from a long slumber.

Rumors began to run rampant. Lines of communication were inadequate. Information was sketchy, or nonexistent. Concerns grew. Silence bred fear. Fear in turn bred resentment and anger. The Oakhurst Residents Association became actively involved in this issue at the outset and has attempted to replace rumor with fact and to gather and make available information about the specific process associated with the development of such a project.

There are three central questions. First, can the fragile Sierra environ-