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MERIT
P O BOX 665
Campo, CA 91906

**Who do you want to vote for in
November and why?**

**Candidates Forum for November
Elections**

POSTAL PATRON

Campo, CA 91906

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MERIT - MISSION STATEMENT

“The primary objectives and purposes of MERIT shall be to provide education and information that will 1) protect and maintain the natural resources, 2) promote responsible use of ground water, and 3) preserve the rural character of the community.”

Candidates Forum - School Board and Planning Group - September 23, 2006 - Community Center

Prior to the Planning Group meeting September 23rd you, the voters, will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates seeking election in the November General Election to the Campo/Lake Morena Planning Group and to the Mountain Empire School Board. The Forum commences at 4:30 PM on Monday in the Community Center and will end at 6:45 PM just before the Planning Group meeting starts. Voters will submit questions in writing and a moderator will present the questions to the candidates who will each have one minute to answer. This forum will not be a debate by the candidates. It will be your opportunity to hear what each candidate has to say about the issues that face our community.

Refreshments will be served. Much thought and planning has gone in to organizing this event

to ensure that it is fair, impartial and unbiased and that it is very informative.

The event is presented by the Campo Business Association, MERIT and Campo Mountain Empire Kiwanis. These community organizations realize how important voting is and want you to be fully informed on the candidates.

It's HOPEless to believe all you see during election campaigns, judge the issues on their MERIT

We all know there is an election coming up. Signs and letters and debates are coming earlier and in greater volume and will only increase in the next six weeks.

The central issue - and there is only one real issue - in our local Planning Group Election is the **slow growth agenda supported by Noblitt and Slaff and Esry and Morse** and endorsed by MERIT **versus the massive development and rapid growth supported by HOPE**, the **Houses full Of People Everywhere** group. The developers want, among other things, Star Ranch and its 460 homes.

We will credit Randy and his gang for being very clever and masters in the art of hiding their intentions behind slick mottos and very expensive signs. Do you think a lariat on a sign means that the organization wants to keep Campo rural?

We believe that the great majority of Campo/Lake Morena voters have been here for a few years and know what is going on. Over 91% of the today's voters were here for the November 2004 election and over 83% were here for the November 2002 election when Randy tried to stop the citizens from getting an elected Planning Group because, to quote Randy, you were not ready for democracy.

You know that Pat Noblitt and Bev Esry and Bill Slaff were for Growth at a Rural Pace then and have demonstrated each month at the Planning Group that they heard what you wanted and have voted that way.

We feel that the initial confusion that arose when HOPE adopted Slow Growth for their advertising will fade away once you look at the candidates and their supporters. You will recognize who will protect Campo and Lake Morena and protect our water and will protect our community character and our life style.

Don't you wonder why there are no campaign signs on the Star Ranch property?

We have Star Ranch people pleading with friends that they have to get these houses built and that they need you to the vote for the HOPE slate. In the last election Star Ranch had pro development signs all over their property (one of their bulls had the good sense to attack and destroy one of the signs on 94). This year nothing. Are they trying to hide their convictions?

Do you wonder why HOPE set up a Recipient Committee a special Political Action Committee - a PAC - to collect thousands of dollars to finance their campaign?

PAC's are the tools of big business that are set up to collect big sums of money - often from people who are not residents in the community. However, this is a local planning group election. Recipient Committees are established to elect a slate of candidates. Why is a PAC needed? There must be some big money issues in the mix and development is big money. As Barry DeVorzon told us in a Planning Group meeting he had to develop Star Ranch because it will cost him a lot of money if he does not.

Do you wonder why HOPE circulated fliers promising residents tax deductible donations to support HOPE when everyone knows political donations are never eligible for a tax donation?

Randy Lenac, the HOPE president, did eventually learn that the tax deductions were not legal and withdrew the solicitation. But why the mad rush to get that flier out without checking what is legal? Some people considered that an attempt to buy a vote.

Do you consider the HOPE website false and misleading advertising?

You should look at the HOPE website. It is slick - really well done - a very professional job. You can find it at www.hopeofme.org. It is so slick that even MERIT members, when they first looked at the site, said "Wow, why aren't these guys working with MERIT and the Planning Group to preserve and protect the Campo we know and love?" But after looking at the pages they said "Wow, what a

slick piece of deception. The Old Stone Store and the Mill and the Oaks are not the more than 1,000 homes proposed for our area that will crush Buckman Spring Road and radically change our area” MERIT considers most of what we have heard to date to be very professional but very false and misleading advertising.

Where has Randy Lenac been the last 24 months and why is he now directing this campaign?

We should be talking about the issues facing our community and our elected Planning Group. We should be talking about traffic on Buckman Springs Road and sand trucks on Buckman and our groundwater supply and the wonderful visual landscape with its beautiful panorama of Campo Creek Valley and water problems in Lake Morena and GP 2020 proposals and Camp Lockett.

Unfortunately Randy has interjected himself into the middle of the election and we can not hide that fact. When his term on the Planning Group was coming to a conclusion, he dropped out of PG activities and once his term ended he stopped attending meetings. On a couple of occasions he came to trumpet the virtues of Star Ranch and Barry DeVorzon. Randy was a rabid supporter of Star Ranch even before the proposal was anything more than just Barry’s desire to not lose the opportunity to make money on developing his 2,150 acres. The Planning Group voted to deny the extreme density that Star Ranch wanted but Randy rescheduled a vote on the same agenda item for Star Ranch two times despite the fact that this was a direct violation of County policy. Section VI of Article VI of Policy I-1 states: *Reconsideration of a previous vote is permissible only if pertinent new information is brought to the attention of the group. A vote to reconsider requires a majority vote. If the Group votes to reconsider, then the group may reconsider the project in light of the new information.* There was no pertinent new information and no vote of the group to reconsider. What is Randy’s interest in this project that most of the community does not want because it will dramatically change Campo?

When Randy dropped out of Planning Group activities, most residents thought that was because he got approval for much higher density for his property than the County proposed for GP 2020 and much higher density than was received by the surrounding owners of large parcels. The assumption was that he was happy and was no longer interested.

For many of us the question is what does Randy have to gain in developing Campo? Is he a proxy for Barry DeVorzon? No one knows but the questions loom over all the land use debates we are having and the land use decisions that are the nexus of the coming election.

As many of you know Mike Thometz (President of MERIT) writes many of these newsletters. Jean Bates tells me frequently when we are at community meetings that I have no right to speak about community affairs because I have not been here very long (for her 13 years is not very long and disqualifies me) yet Mr. Lenac, who has been here for about 6 or 7 years (half as long as I have been here), is the right person to run her campaign and write all sorts of letters attacking MERIT and the Planning Group for voting in concert with the community’s wishes for slow growth.

THE GUYS IN THE BLUE SIGN ARE NOT THE GROWTH AT A RURAL PACE FOLKS

Do you wonder what “enhancement” means and what “preservation” means as those terms are thrown around by the those espousing hundreds of additional homes and ancillary development. Those terms sound good but think about what they are supposed to signify and what is really being proposed. Enhancement means to increase something that already exists. Preservation means to preserve intact and unimpaired and to keep in the same condition. That is not what HOPE is attempting to do.

We need to clarify what is happening with growth in our area. The allegations about the Planning Group stopping growth and that no homes are available for those who want to live here are bogus. Here is Randy again writing in the *Lake Morena Village and Campo News and Views* that your Planning Group is a zero growth committee. That is totally false.

In the last 15 years the number of postal service deliveries (representing the number of homes) has increased 25% and in the six years this newsletter has been distributed the number of deliveries has increased 15%. There are a number of new homes on Buckman and at least 5 new homes on La Posta and new homes on Oak Drive and on Shockey Truck Trail and in Lake Morena. There is organic growth which is in keeping with County planning. That organic growth at a rural pace will continue in

the years to come. The Planning Group has consistently supported that growth as long as water is respected.

But very large subdivisions adding 40 homes here and 85 homes there and 460 homes at Cameron Corners is not organic growth or growth at a rural pace. Do not be fooled by attempts to cast this election as zero growth or no growth versus modest growth that will (not) enhance our community.

What do all the signs tell us?

We feel sorry for any business that has to deal with this election. None of them want to offend anyone so they almost all of them tell both sides that they can put up a sign. And HOPE has relly been pressuring the local businesses to put up their signs. So we do not think the signs tell anyone very much. On the other hand the expense that has gone into the HOPE signs tells you where the money is. The signs tell us that you need to talk with the candidates, read their statements, talk others in the community and, maybe most important since you will be evaluating incumbents, look at their voting record and their promises made when elected and how they have upheld those promises. Finally the signs tell us we should think long and hard about what we want for Campo and Lake Morena and vote for what we love.

Who is the Special Interest Group in this election?

Every special interest group is always ready to brand their opposition as a “special interest” group. During the 2002 election when you voted to replace the Sponsor Group with an elected group that would represent your interests, those who thought you were not mature enough to vote for people to represent you on land use and land planning issues labeled the Growth at a Rural Pace candidates as a "special interest" group. It was funny to most of us and the voters saw that for what it was.

The question has returned. Who do you think is the special interest group in this election? It is certainly not Pat Noblitt and Bill Slaff and Bev Esry and Denise Morse. Is it a group that sets up a PAC to run a campaign? Who is the special interest group and what do they have to gain?

Information on Voting

For those of you who need information and forms for voting in the November election, those forms and an information sheet with relevant information on voting requirements will be available at the Candidates Forum on September 25th.

You can also pick up all the forms (registration form, name change and address change) and the information sheet at the MERIT Recycling Center when they are open Sunday 10-1 and Monday 9-2.

Planning Group Meeting September 23, 2006 at 7 PM at the Community Center

The regular monthly meeting of the Planning Group will be September 23rd immediately following the Candidates Forum.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES for July 10th and August 28th 2006

V. CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. Dianne Jacob's office called to cancel her coffee that was scheduled for September 29th, but has promised to hold one prior to the end of the year.

VI. COMMITTEES/LIAISON REPORTS – NO REPORTS WILL BE GIVEN THIS MONTH.

VII. EXPENSES: Please report any valid expenses.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- Discussion regarding possible changes to Standing Rules. (30 min) – May be tabled to next month.
- Discussion regarding adopting standing rules for membership on sub-committees. (Discussion and Possible vote - 30 min) Possible vote to table this action until the November meeting.
- Discussion and possible vote on the application for a type 20 off-sale beer and wine ABC license by Doug Wright for his commercial property at 31471 Highway 94. (10 min)

- Discussion and possible vote on Buckman Springs improvement request to DPW: (1) Reflectors on Buckman Springs Road center divide (2) Cottonwood Bridge – paint prior to its rebuilding in 2012 (3) Install special School Bus lanes allowing traffic to move over – (15 min)
- Discussion and possible vote on the cell tower located at 34061 Shockey Truck Trail which we had approved on 2-27-06. County has now required that landscaping has been added and a replacement map has been submitted to us. (10 min)

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

XI. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING – October 23, 2006

XII. ADJOURNMENT - Meeting will adjourn no later than 9:00 pm due to Candidate Forum held earlier.

Any questions or items for the Planning Group should be sent to Chairwoman Bev Esry, Campo/Lake Morena Planning Group, 1883 Marc Trl., Campo CA 91906. Tel. # (619) 478-5034 Email: bevesry@hughes.net. This agenda as well as the minutes of the Planning Group are available via email to anyone who wants them. Please email Bev Esry to be put on the distribution list

Sale of commercial lot in Campo Hills

Many of you have seen the For Sale sign on the commercial lot on Sheridan Road in Campo Hills. The lot was sold and the sale is in escrow. MERIT does not know the identity of the purchaser or the possible use of the lot. We were told that KB Home will build a building shell as part of the sale conditions. The initial building KB proposed for the site was reviewed by the Planning Group which asked for some clarification on the exterior design. KB Home said they would return to the Planning Group which would then vote on the plans. However, they have not returned and we do not know what the building will look like.

Freedom Ranch Plans Expansion

In May Freedom Ranch addressed the Planning Group and advised them that they were planning to expand their operation and would have to submit a Major Use Permit application to the County. They were not specific about when they planned to start the expansion process and the impression conveyed was that the expansion was a few years in the future.

Glen Webber appeared at the August Planning Group meeting to provide more specific information. Freedom Ranch is underway with their plans and has been meeting with the Department of Planning and Land Use to discuss what they want to do and what will be required. They intend to submit their MUP application before the end of 2006. They process would normally take about two years to the time of completion with the expansion complete by the end of 2008.

Freedom Ranch owns property on both sides of their existing property. Their preliminary plans are for expansion that would double the number of residents they have on site and would provide additional facilities for the residents. MERIT will provide additional details on the expansion in our November newsletter.

Supervisor Jacob postpones September 29th Coffee in Campo

Supervisor Jacob has postponed this meeting and plans to reschedule the meeting prior to the end of the year.

Back Country Phone Book

Many of us continue to use the Mountain Empire Telephone Directory despite the many inaccuracies and missing listings and the fact that it has been a couple of years since it was last distributed. A new phone book is being prepared. It is important to know that no one will be listed unless they apply. Listings are voluntary. You must complete a form to be included in the book. These forms are available throughout the community including Shady Rock Video and MERIT Recycling. You can also obtain the form and submit the form on line to listing@backcountryphonebook.com Listings need to be submitted by October 15th and the phone book will be distributed in January 2007.

Camp Lockett Study and Historical Designation

The Camp Lockett Subcommittee and County Parks representatives reported at the August PG meeting that the contractor funded by a grant from Supervisor Jacob was moving forward on the study of Camp Lockett. There is a tentative public meeting scheduled for Campo for the end of September to present their progress and to obtain public comment and input on the plans that are being developed. This report is to be followed by a final report by the end of 2006.

These meetings and the planning for Camp Lockett are extremely important. The future of Camp Lockett will have a major impact on our community. It makes no difference if you support HOPE's vision of massive growth for the community with hundreds of additional homes and all the impacts that brings or if you support Growth at Rural Pace that MERIT and the current Planning Group position on controlling growth, you will be impacted. Many residents on both sides of the growth issue are very supportive of the development of Camp Lockett as a park and historical site. Your input to the planning process is so very important if you want to see Camp Lockett become an asset to our community.

Please participate in these public meetings so the County will know what we value and want for Campo.

VFW Annual Hog Wild Celebration

VFW Post 2080 Auxiliary will be putting on their annual Hog Wild celebration on Saturday September 30. There will be a live band and a deep pit barbeque. The festivities will start at noon and the barbeque opens at 2 PM. Usually this event is in October, but the Fire Department pancake breakfast fundraiser on October 8th conflicted and the VFW changed the date.

The VFW will also be featuring a Machaca Breakfast on Sunday October 1st. \$5.00 per plate which includes tortillas, salsa, refried beans.

The SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink may be coming to our area

We have followed the saga surrounding the application by SDG&E to build a new high-voltage transmission line. They would like to build it in northern San Diego County including locating a large section of the line through the middle of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. There has been enormous and sustained opposition with a lot of questions about the need for such a line and the real reasons for the line. The continual stream of adds from SDG&E touting the line but never addressing the issues that have been raised are an indication that the public does not support the proposal. SDG&E is running scared and is resorting to slick PR to sell their plan. On September 13th the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) told the company to provide a new alternate route for the proposed high-voltage transmission line that avoids the State Park.. The CPUC also asked the public to present alternate routes.

Given how big Anza-Borrego is, that could mean alternate routes running along I-8 or next to the existing high-voltage line by the border. Many members of the public have already suggested those two locations. This means that the routes could be coming right through our Planning Area. Public scoping meetings for the Powerlink start the first week of October. Even though we are in the path of a potential route the State has not scheduled any meetings in this area for residents to comment. All the five meetings are set up for North County and San Diego. We need to correspond with the Public Utilities Commission and request a meeting in this area so our input can be heard and we can see what alternates are being proposed by SDG&E.

The project has NOT been approved yet. According to state and federal law, issues that the public raises during scoping meetings have to be considered by the CPUC. The public meetings are currently scheduled for El Centro on 10/2, Ramona on 10/3, Borrego Springs on 10/4 and two separate meetings in San Diego on 10/5.

The scoping meeting addresses and dates are listed at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/hottopics/1energy/ceqa+schedule.pdf>.

One major concern is that many people very knowledgable regarding this proposal believe it

doesn't need to be built at all—other, better, less destructive alternatives exist. We are also concerned because our area of the Back Country has not been following this project because it supposedly wasn't headed anywhere near them. Now they could be taken by surprise.

MERIT would recommend that residents contact CPUC with a request that one of the hearings be held in our area. We also recommend that the Planning Group (and the other Planning Groups in our area) write CPUC requesting a hearing in our community. We do not need this type of surprise.

You can read about the proposed meetings at a CPUC web site (go to page two):

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/hottopics/1energy/ceqa+schedule.pdf> .You can read a news story from last week regarding the CPUC's direction to SDG&E:

http://nctimes.com/articles/2006/09/14/news/inland/21_02_369_13_06.txt The general CPUC website on the Sunrise Powerlink is at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/hottopics/1energy/a0512014+.htm>.

Campo Volunteer Fire Department Spaghetti Dinner October 8th

The Campo Fire Auxiliary will hold a spaghetti dinner on October 8th at the Fire Department from 4PM to 7PM to raise money for the Fire Department. These events are well done and well attended and everyone has a good time while supporting the firemen. Mark you calendar and attend.

Campo Fire District Fee Proposal

The Campo Fire Board is considering a proposal for a per parcel fee to help fund their activities. While there was discussion to have the proposal on the November ballot, the directors have decided to conduct a mail vote at a later date. This seems like a good idea because local issues get overwhelmed in these November elections. When the proposal is moving forward to a vote MERIT will provide you with all the details including arguments for and against the proposal.

Homemakers has new hours and days

The Homemakers store will experiment with expanded hours and days. On a trial basis the store will be open on FRIDAYS as well as Thursday and Saturday beginning October 6. Same hours, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for shopping and dropping off donations. These wonderful ladies are doing such good work for the community and the community is in turn supporting them with donations and with patronage. Business has been so good Homemakers had to get a second storage container to hold donations being prepared for sale. Theodora Davis and IMS Recycling Services donated a refurbished container similar to the one they gave to Homemakers when they moved to the current location.

We recommend that you stop by and see all the wonderful items they have for sale and at such reasonable prices.

Official Historic Highway 80 Opening and Celebration October 21st

The State has recognized Historic Highway 80 and there is a celebration of this recognition and the Highway's 80th birthday on October 21st. There will be events held throughout the day along the route from El Centro to San Diego. The schedule can be found at the San Diego East Visitors websites which are www.OldHighway80.com and www.visitsandiegoeast.com

Viejas Casino will be the central location for a number of the events including an antique car show but there are all day events in Jacumba and a procession of old cars traveling the route west from Yuma. There will be stops in Holtville, El Centro, Jacumba and the Golden Acorn. Alpine has a big celebration planned.

This should be a fun event and something we all can enjoy. You can also participate. Call the Visitors Bureau for additional information at 445-0180.

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7TH

Vote for the Growth at a Rural Pace Candidates

Vote for

Bill Slaff
Bev Esry
Pat Noblitt