

The Joshua Tree




February 11, 2025

HIGH SPEED RAIL

The vision for a high-speed rail (HSR) connection between Southern California and Las Vegas has spanned decades, evolving through technological advancements, political negotiations, and economic challenges. From the late 1970s to the groundbreaking of Brightline West in 2024, the project's history reflects changing transportation priorities and innovations. **Rob Kilpatrick**, Rotarian and Senior Project Manager / Senior Associate for David Evans and Associates, Inc. has been studying High Speed Rail since the 80's and shared his vast knowledge with the group this week.



cost of \$2-\$3 billion and suggested a roundtrip fare of \$65. It proposed a system resembling French and German technologies, leveraging magnetic levitation (Maglev) technology. However, local resistance emerged. By 1985, opposition groups were actively challenging the idea, labeling it as a "Super Train" project that would negatively impact local communities and environments.

Efforts to bring high-speed rail to the region continued in the 1990s, led by the California-Nevada Super Speed Train Commission. Discussions centered around partnering with German consortia

The concept of a high-speed rail link between Southern California and Nevada emerged during the late 1970s, fueled by a national energy crisis. While the U.S. grappled with gas shortages, Europe was pioneering advanced rail technologies, such as France's TGV and Germany's InterCity Express. Nevada proposed a "Bullet Train" to connect Las Vegas with Southern California, aiming to provide a fast, efficient alternative to car travel along the congested I-15 corridor.

and advancing Maglev technology. During this period, the City of Adelanto invested heavily in transforming the former George Air Force Base into a High Desert International Airport. However, these plans faltered as Victorville secured the project instead.

In 1981, the City of Las Vegas requested a feasibility study, which was released in 1983. The study estimated a project

Another blow to regional rail came in 1997, when Amtrak decommissioned its Desert Wind service, which had operated between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City via Las Vegas. Despite these setbacks, the groundwork for future HSR projects continued, though no substantial progress was made during the decade.

Momentum for high-speed rail reignited in 2005 with the formation of Desert Xpress, a private initiative backed by Marnell Companies and supported by Senator Harry Reid. Renamed XpressWest to reflect its broader vision for HSR throughout the Southwest, the project initially aimed to connect Las Vegas to Victorville, with future extensions to Palmdale and Los Angeles via the proposed High Desert Corridor.

This Week's Functionaries

- Invocation:** Mike Johnson
- Flag Salute:** Arsalee Morales
- 4-Way Test:** Bryan Gillespie
- Fine Master:** Ryan McEachron

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GILLESPIE'S GAB

Thank you to Rob Kilpatrick for taking time this week to give us a history lesson on High Speed Rail.

So many components and challenges, but hopefully rail through the High Desert will be a real thing in the not so distant future.



Thank you to Darron and Donna Poulsen for hosting the Super Bowl Party this past weekend. The food was wonderful and everyone had a great time. Congrats to David North for winning the Pool, taking home \$625!

Romance was in the air this week, with Club members and guests gathering at Chateau Chang for our annual Valentines Day Dinner. Great food, wine, candy and prizes were enjoyed by all! Thank you to all who attended.

Our next service project will be making our Easter Baskets, which will take place on April 15th. There is still time to donate, so sign up, donate, and make these baskets our largest yet!

Until next week...

Bryan

Environmental reports for the project were completed and approved in 2011. However, a request for a \$5.5 billion loan from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was denied in 2013, stalling progress. The project entered a dormant phase, as financial and regulatory challenges overshadowed its development.

The HSR project gained new life in 2018 when Fortress Investment Group acquired it, rebranding it as Brightline West. The private rail company had successfully launched high-speed rail operations in Florida and sought to replicate this success in the Southwest.

Brightline West's plans involve state-of-the-art technology enabling trains to run in the median of the I-15 freeway, bypassing traffic congestion. Key stations include:

Las Vegas Station: A major hub with extensive amenities.

Victor Valley Station (Apple Valley): A smaller depot serving regional passengers.

Hesperia Station: Located at I-15 and Joshua Street, designed as a commuter station connecting to Metrolink, with peak-hour services to Rancho Cucamonga.

The Rancho Cucamonga station will be a critical hub, linking Brightline West to the Metrolink system, providing seamless transit options to Los Angeles and beyond.

Despite its progress, the project faces challenges. Critics argue that Victorville, while strategically located, is not an ideal terminus for Southern California travelers. Extending the line to Rancho Cucamonga addresses this concern, but the project must overcome logistical, financial, and environmental hurdles.

On the positive side, the use of advanced rail technology, such as Maglev and electric trains running in freeway medians, showcases the potential of sustainable, efficient transportation. Brightline West's integration with Metrolink and its focus on commuter-friendly services position it as a transformative project for the region.

The journey of high-speed rail from Los Angeles to Las Vegas has been long and winding, marked by visionary ideas, technical innovations, and political hurdles. With Brightline West's groundbreaking and plans for further extensions, the dream of a high-speed rail connection between these two iconic destinations is closer than ever to becoming a reality. This project represents a significant step toward reducing traffic congestion, lowering carbon emissions, and providing a modern transportation alternative for millions of travelers.



THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

Big Blue Poker Chip



Rob Kilpatrick had the chance to draw the Blue Chip... and did it! Rob was the lucky winner of \$350!

We will start again next week with 14 chips and \$200 for the lucky Rotarian who can draw the Blue Chip!

Rotary Guests

Our only guest this week was **Stefanie Montoya** who attended with **Bryan Gillespie**.

Spoon of Exception



Bo Goulet had the Spoon for another week and shared information on Mojave River Mortgage.

They are a full-service mortgage company serving all of California. Also serving the surrounding cities in San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange and Los Angeles County.

Whether you are buying a home or refinancing in California, Bo can help you realize your dream of homeownership or save you money when getting your new lower monthly payment.

Contact Bo at (760) 713-6137. Mojave River Mortgage, More Mortgage Options More Happy HOMEOWNERS!

Fine Session

Ryan McEachron was our Fine Master and due to time, only issued one fine to **David North**. At this past weekend's Super Bowl Party, David won the betting squares and left the party with \$625! Ryan chose to penalize David 10%, so he owes \$62!

Raffle

Bo Goulet was the big raffle winner this week! First, he won a Victor Valley Transit coffee cup from **Chris Ackerman**, then a \$15 Target gift card from **Bill Edwards** and then a bottle of wine from **David North**. **Mike Johnson** also took home a bottle of wine, and **Bob Basen** also left the meeting with a VVTA coffee cup.



Bob himself donated a bottle of Creek Cut wine, that will be enjoyed by **Marianne Edwards**, while Ackerman received a set of Rotary coasters from **Jim Murray**. Jim will be having a spaghetti feast thanks to the pasta

making gift basket from **Rob Kilpatrick**.

Rob also gave away some candy that will be enjoyed by **Ryan McEachron**, while Rob's night's will be a little brighter thanks to the candle he won as a donation from Bo. Finally, **Mike Johnson** brought a couple of gifts, first a Providence St. Mary mouse pad that will be used by Bill Scott and then a beanie that will be worn by Ryan.

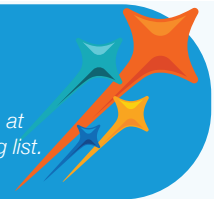
The Polio Pig

Collected this week: \$17.00

Collected to Date: \$21,097.83

Total equals: 103,174 Doses!

**One dollar equals 2 Doses of Vaccine!
\$500 pays for a Polio Clinic!**



VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

Board of Directors

President 2024-2025	Bryan Gillespie
President 2025-2027	Bill Edwards
President 2027 - 2028	Please be Interviewed
Immediate Past President	Steve Murray
Executive Secretary/Foundation/Grants	Margaret Cooker
Treasurer/Scholarships	David North
Youth Services/Ethics Essay	Ron Boyd
Club Service & Membership	Bill Edwards
Community Service/Speech Contests	Mike Johnson
Vocational Service	Please Volunteer
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Member At Large, Young Leaders Contact.....	Arsalee Morales
Member At Large, Special Projects	Rob Kilpatrick

Members-at-Large: Bob Basen, Darron Poulsen, Angel Espino

Positions & Committee Chairs

BOD/PP Secretary.....	Pam Murray
Special Billing	Esther Mears (TBD)
Public Service Awards	Please Volunteer
Teacher Mini-Grants	Angel Espino
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Angel Espino
Joshua Tree Editor	Chris Ackerman
Read B4K	Please Volunteer
Foundation & Grants	Margaret Cooker
Food Baskets.....	Please Volunteer
Interact (Junior Rotary).....	Please Volunteer
Programs	Mike Page
Fundraising	Stefanie Montoya
S.T.A.R. Students	Angel Espino
Club Learning Facilitator.....	Please Volunteer

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship
at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley
Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville

Make-up Days and Locations

MONDAY:	San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon
TUESDAY:	Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m. Empire Lakes Golf Course Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens
WEDNESDAY:	San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St, Barstow, CA
THURSDAY:	Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple Valley, Noon. Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m. Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon
FRIDAY:	San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.

Calendar Dates

Mar 10: **Board of Directors Meeting**
5:00pm Fellowship
5:30pm Board Meeting
Location: Robar Enterprises
17671 Bear Valley Road, Hesperia, CA

Upcoming Programs

- Feb 18:** **Area High School 4-Way Speech Contest** (Johnson)
- Feb 25:** Melanie Ajanwachuku **TOPIC "Fueling Life: How Smart Nutrition Choices Empower Health and Longevity"** (Page)
- Mar 4:** Nicole Orr and Katie Berrios, Providence St. Mary **TOPIC "Coordinating Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in the High Desert"** (Page)
- Mar 11:** **OPEN**
- Mar 18:** **Junior High 4-Way Speech Contest** (Johnson)
- Mar 25:** **OPEN**

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