

A Better Quality Of Life. For All Nevadans.



Council for a
Better Nevada

CBN

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission

The Council for a Better Nevada is an organization of concerned citizens who seek to improve the quality of life in Nevada. Our intention is to identify and engage in community issues whose outcomes will greatly affect the lives of Nevadans. By bringing together talent, resources and leadership from private, public and non-profit sectors, our goal is to assist in developing solutions to issues which will create a sustainable, healthy and prosperous Nevada community.

2010 Platform

Executive Director Letter

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Executive Director Maureen Peckman Executive Director



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A year ago in my 2009 Executive Director’s letter, I reflected upon the difficult times Nevada was facing as our businesses and communities endured the worst economic global recession in the past 80 years. Indeed, the “business of Nevada” was suffering along with the rest of the world and those of us who claim to be part of this 3 + million citizenry entity we call **Home**.

The Council, among many stakeholder organizations across the state, has continued to manage a stubborn 2010 with **Tenacity**. In “the highest in the nation” category, Nevada ran first in home foreclosures, unemployment, and the projected state budget deficit rate, to name just a few. When we look further toward a national and international perspective, the Global MetroMonitor report, a publication of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program in partnership with the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank’s Alfred Herrhausen Society, recently released its International Metro ranking of the top 150 metropolitan regions around the world. Based on pre-recession data on economic output and employment, Las Vegas was ranked 14th. Today, we sit at 146. More interestingly, the top 30 metro performers are emerging economies primarily from Asia and India. The bottom ranked 30 metro regions comprised mainly of U.S. and European bases. We must ask ourselves, is this downturn a temporary ‘spending’ issue for our economy, and with better budget discipline will soon be back to annual increased GDP and productivity levels from the traditional economic bases we draw from? Or is this a renaissance moment in need of new ideas and innovations that, while challenging our past economic belief systems and behaviors, will reinvent Nevada for long term economic sustainability that avoid times of downturn and maintain our **Competitiveness** within an emerging and more aggressive world economy?

The Council’s work this year has engaged in issues core to the vitality and quality of life for all Nevadans, and the pretext of our work has been that new ideas--

coupled with strong **Leadership** and action--will be the backbone of Nevada’s next economy. We have together made quiet progress. For that ambitious endeavor and in partnership with so many across this great community, I am pleased to present the 2010 Council for a Better Nevada annual report.

The Nevada Vision Stakeholder Group (NVSG), commissioned by the 2009 legislature, worked through the year and provided a sound blueprint for probable emerging economies and sustainable community frameworks for the state. The Council has always asked itself and many since its inception--what makes a state **Great**? The NVSG has delivered a guide star for federal, state and local public, private and non-profit entities as a bridge to an emerging and sustainable Nevada. Concurrently, as a new Superintendent search ensued in the CCSD, the Clark County School Board of Trustees stepped up and ran one of the most community-participatory and professional searches in its history, recruiting one of the top leaders in U.S. K-12 education today. The 2010-11 school year now finds itself operating with 30 empowerment schools throughout the district, with approximately 30,000 students in the system. A 3-year UNLV Center for Evaluation & Assessment study was released in September, 2010 detailing findings that the structure and performance of the CCSD empowerment schools on average outperformed non-empowerment CCSD schools and replication should be considered. On the judicial front, the work of the Council joined the effort to appoint selected state judicial offices though support of an existing ballot question campaign that fell short this past November. We are grateful for those who supported the campaign and are mindful for a future opportunity to realign this **Perspective**. The Council continues its work to strengthen the state’s initiative & referendum system and is becoming more aware of southern Nevada’s transportation needs and the critical link between a robust higher education system and a diverse and sustainable economy.



2010 was a hard year of work in the trenches. Quiet, steady and as much as it threw at us, we threw right back. We've got **Fortitude**, but we already knew that about ourselves. Now, as we head into 2011, what will we create for Nevada? As we do all we can to preserve core services for our citizens who are most vulnerable, we are also tasked with building a fair and funded plan for a knowledge-based future; one demanding of **Innovation**, improved efficiency, producing and exporting more goods and services, linking our communities and our state to other markets through technology and transportation corridors and most importantly—delivering a competent, educated and competitive workforce.

Las Vegas has the energy and opportunity to be the success story of an emerging 21st century American city. Already a gateway tourism city to the world, we can layer inspiring and productive new economies that serve to expand how the world views us today. Nevada, with its scale and ability to make decisions that have immediate impact, can write a similar tale. To rebuild our metro and state economy, we must look outward for new ideas. However, we must first ensure we are amongst ourselves strong enough to take bold steps forward for substantive change. If we are open to new ideas, we will be open to an exciting future.

The Council has been humbled and thrilled to have played a small part in the ongoing complex and vital transformation of Nevada, and we are **Optimistic** for its future. We sincerely hope you are as well.

Maureen Peckman

Source: 2010 Global MetroMonitor Report



“Nothing will work. But Everything might.”

Clay Shirkey
Adjunct Professor, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts,
Author of Books on the Internet and Social Media





Who We Are

Officers

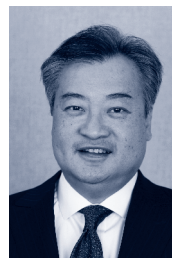
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“A child miseducated is a child lost.”

John F. Kennedy
35th President of the United States

Engagement Issues

Nevada Visioning

Source:

Nevada Vision Stakeholder Report: executive summary

Public Education

UNLV Center for Evaluation and Assessment Study, 2010

Envision WCSO 2015: Investing in our Future

CCSD Superintendent Search: public candidate information

Judicial Selection

Sources:

Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, O'Connor Judicial Selection Initiative

American Judicature Society

Justice at Stake Campaign

Initiative & Referendum

Sources:

Initiative & Referendum Institute

Citizen Lawmakers: The Ballot Initiative Revolution

Ballotpedia.org

Nevada Initiative & Referendum Guide

Political History of Nevada, Questions on the Ballot, Robert Erickson, 2003

Nevada Political History: Questions on the Ballot

Mercury News, "Federal judge strikes down Nev. ballot measure law", September 29, 2008

Las Vegas Review Journal, "EDITORIAL: Petition requirements", October 2, 2008

Blockbuster Democracy, "Harder to Access the Ballot in Nevada", September 2, 2009

National Conference of State Legislatures "Initiative & Referendum Legislation Database"

Nevada Secretary of State "Important 2010 Initiative Dates"



Engagement Issues Nevada Visioning



Since the Council's inception in 2005, we have engaged in conversations with various stakeholders in the community regarding the need for broader thinking about how industry, government and the non-profit sectors come together to create a more sustainable future for Nevada.

The latest economic downturn in Nevada has accelerated that dialogue. When the ideas for the following Vision Stakeholder Report first began as conversation in the Council five years ago, our economy and confidence lived in an entirely different place. Yet even then, as communitarians living in pre-recession conditions, we understood we were missing opportunities for emerging economies in Nevada without the infusion of new ideas, planning and decisive actions. Today, this plan is more critical to our future and survival than ever before.

Thank you to all those who worked tirelessly on its behalf. There were many. The full report can be accessed at

www.cbnonline.org under A Sustainable Nevada, 2010 Nevada Stakeholder Report



Nevada Vision Stakeholder Report

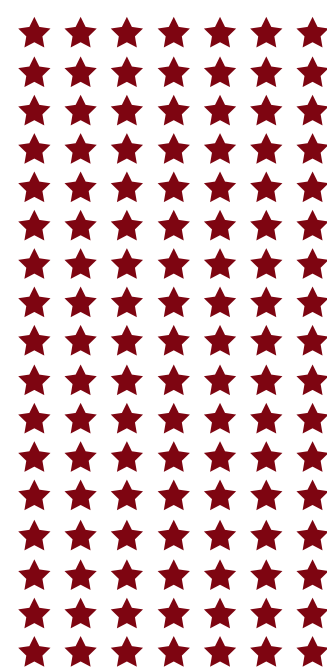
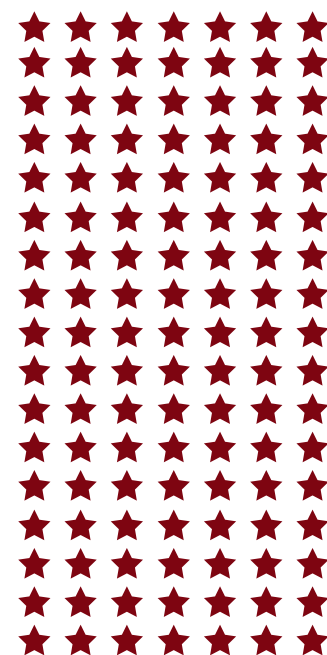
Nevada's severe downturn has brought to light many of the long-term challenges facing the state. Not only is its economy subject to painful swings, but Nevada's primary drivers— consumer services (primarily gaming, hospitality and housing) and resource extraction—will provide less support than they have in past business cycles. Less economic vitality will make it harder to offer Nevadans the quality of life they expect.

The importance of the economy to quality of life is equally clear—quality of life is a hollow promise without a healthy and supportive economy. Similarly, a proper fiscal structure—both in terms of spending and revenues—is critical to delivering on a quality of life promise.

Nevada's consumer and hospitality industries will feel downward pressure on their revenues as aging baby boomers scramble to make up for low lifetime savings. The state's gaming industry faces new competition across the U.S. and abroad. And in rural Nevada, the growth of primary resource industries will be modest, since commodity prices (other than for gold) are not expected to return to their recent peaks for several years.

The state's long-term growth is still expected to exceed the national average. Nevada's relative cost advantages, its hospitable culture, and its vast natural beauty will continue to attract migrants, mitigating shifts in demand for its core industries. Yet population gains, while still significant, will not match the trend of the last 30 years. Residential, retail and hotel construction will therefore no longer be a primary driver of regional growth. Nevada's slowing growth potential is troubling because, even during the state's boom years, many of its residents' needs were not being met. For example, a wide range of educational yardsticks suggests Nevada could do a better job of teaching its children and training its workers. Tight state and local budgets notwithstanding, now is the time to make the structural changes and investments Nevada needs, lest its obstacles become insurmountable in the years ahead.

While Nevada's challenges were put into sharper focus by the recession, these issues have been known and discussed for many years. State and private agencies have developed numerous strategic plans, with the goal of providing public services more efficiently. There have also been numerous studies related to the state's



economic structure, but little has been done to act on their findings. It is time for us to address the issues directly, to act on them and to achieve meaningful progress in the six focus areas detailed in this report. It should also be recognized that there is interdependence and crossover among the six focus areas.

Stakeholders

In accordance with State of Nevada Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 37 of the 2009 Legislative Session, the Interim Finance Committee’s Subcommittee to Conduct a Review of Nevada’s Revenue Structure appointed the Nevada Vision Stakeholder Group. The group was created to assist in developing five-, 10-, and 20-year strategic plans for improving Nevada’s quality of life. Facilitated by Moody’s Analytics, the group’s primary task was to look broadly at the most important goals for Nevada’s future and to identify the key investments and structural changes needed to achieve them.

Although the group included several policy experts, detailed policy analysis was not its aim. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, from the structure of the economy to education, healthcare, energy and the environment, public safety, and transportation. Stakeholders came from many backgrounds, representing Nevadans’ diverse interests.

Business leaders joined representatives of organized labor, philanthropic groups and public servants. The members brought a wide range of perspectives, from academic to practical, representing educators, researchers, builders and farmers. Nevada’s regional diversity was evident, with members from both urban and rural areas. Given the group’s range and broad consensus, its recommendations for the future are relevant and critical for the state.

The stakeholders had the advantage of meeting outside

the legislative process. Thus, the group could set goals and make recommendations without considering political trade-offs or other constraints faced by policymakers. This freedom helped generate a wealth of creative ideas, both large and small. Some of these innovations may not receive the attention they deserve because of current legislative or constitutional barriers that can be removed only through structural reform. Yet Nevada’s needs are serious enough to suggest that such reforms be on the table for discussion.

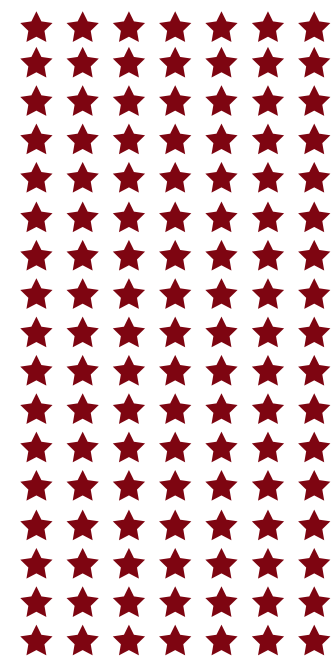
Quality of Life

Quality of life can mean very different things to different people. This was particularly true within the NVSG because of the diverse interests and viewpoints represented.

The group’s overall vision for Nevada revolves around a “triple bottom line” principle of economic development, environmental sustainability, and equitable opportunity for the citizens of Nevada. Economic development is the bedrock of progress and the reason living standards continue to rise. Environmental sustainability captures the commitment to responsibly and efficiently manage the state’s natural resources. Equity embodies a pledge to ensure that all Nevadans have a share in the state’s future.

The discussion of the stakeholders’ vision is organized around six subjects, corresponding to broad policy areas that are essential to enhancing Nevadans’ quality of life and fostering a fertile business environment throughout the state:

- »» The Economy
- »» Energy and Environment
- »» Transportation
- »» Education



»» Healthcare and Well-Being

»» Public Safety

There is considerable overlap among these subject areas. For example, a successful economy requires plentiful energy, a strong transportation network, and a healthy environment. Similarly, a secure, well-educated and healthy population needs a growing economy.

Goals

Determining how Nevada can reach and sustain a desirable quality of life was the task of the NVSG. Members of the group identified a number of broad goals along with specific objectives and strategies to achieve them.

Among these broad goals is the need to diversify Nevada's industrial structure in a way that will reduce volatility in its economy, employment and public services.

Nevada's infrastructure and resources can be leveraged to attract clean energy producers and other high value-added industries.

Nevada can also take advantage of its position near growth markets on the West Coast to support its transportation and logistics industries.

Complementing the goal of diversification is a modern, well-maintained transportation system that will increase the connectedness of communities throughout the state and strengthen Nevada's links with the Intermountain West. New industries must also be developed in conjunction with suitable water conservation practices.

Diversity will add well-paying jobs in high value-added industries that can help Nevada stay competitive in a changing global economy. Such jobs require a wider array of skills and increased workforce quality, in turn demanding more from education and training systems. To produce workers for growing, prosperous industries, graduation rates from high school through graduate

school must rise. The commitment to education must start in early childhood, particularly for those from lower-income families, and continue with a focus on hiring qualified teachers and keeping students engaged.

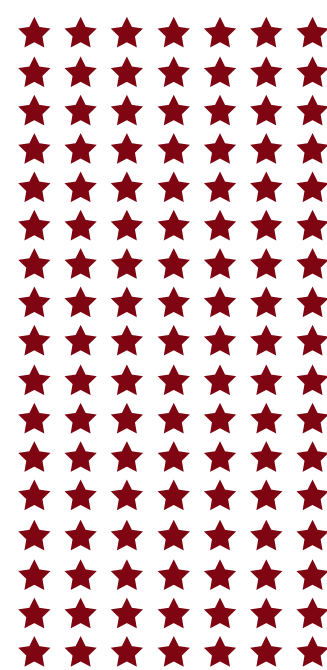
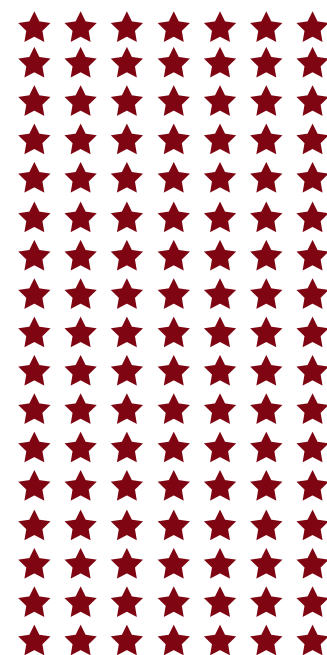
A healthy community means providing not only educational opportunities for all but also a clean and safe environment and a wide range of cultural and recreational opportunities. A healthy population remains the foundation, producing important objectives for improving Nevadans' access to healthcare while increasing efficiency to contain costs.

Greater educational attainment and improved public safety would make Nevada more attractive to households and firms, leading to stronger and more stable economic growth. Income gains associated with growth in turn would improve the performance of the state's systems of education and public safety.

Key Themes

While the NVSG's goals are as diverse and wide-ranging as the state itself, several common themes emerged from its discussions regarding strategy, and these are woven through its recommendations. Four such themes are:

- »» Workforce development
 - »» Connectedness and collaboration
 - »» Utilization of federal resources
 - »» Adoption of information technology solutions
- Other important themes highlighted by members of the NVSG include youth intervention and prevention programs, expanded home- and community-based programs, early-childhood development, efficient use of resources, and accountability.



Key Strategies

The NVSG proposed an array of strategies that would help the state achieve its quality of life goals. The following key strategies were proposed by the group for each subject area:

Economy

- »» Expand public-private research capabilities and technology transfer through increased venture capital funding and use of federal grant money.
- »» Attract growth industries by reviewing the state's incentive system and improving upon its already-accommodative regulatory environment.

Energy & Environment

- »» Secure better access to federal land for renewable energy development
- »» Promote new water conservation technology for application in the state and for export.

Transportation

- »» Build Interstate 11 between Las Vegas and Phoenix and seek another round of federal support to eventually extend the highway to Reno.
- »» Build high speed rail between Las Vegas and southern California.

Education

- »» Increase the share of adults with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- »» Allow public universities to retain a larger share of tuition and differentiate tuition for different schools and programs.

Health & Well-being

- »» Expand enrollment in Medicaid and CHIP programs to expand access to healthcare in the near term.
- »» Promote investment in healthcare information technology to lower costs and improve efficiency.

Public Safety

- »» Establish a second National Fire Academy to serve the needs of the western U.S.
- »» Promote agency collaboration to reduce substance abuse to include rehabilitation options.

Measuring Progress

For the NVSG's efforts to be of lasting use, progress toward Nevada's goals must be monitored through quantitative performance measures.

Tracking performance allows the state to make midcourse corrections or adopt alternative strategies where needed, promoting flexibility and a focus on long-term outcomes.

Each stated goal or objective in this report includes a performance metric, with five-, 10- and 20-year benchmarks. In most cases, the near-term goal is simply stabilization, with measurable progress expected in 10 years.

After 20 years, the successful implementation of these strategies will advance Nevada's ranking significantly among its relevant peer group of states. The following pages include two key metrics with benchmarks for each subject area. Additional metrics and benchmarks can be found in the focus chapters.



Engagement Issues Public Education



K-12 Public Education

We report on the progress of public education this year via the Council's engagement in two of the many community efforts that are at work to enhance K-12 public education. First, many came together this year to bring a strong new leader into the Clark County School District. Leadership is critical now more than ever before in Nevada public education. Second, we continue to illuminate the success of the now 5 year-old empowerment system that is slowly growing in the CCSD with trending success at many promising levels. Lastly, for all the bold moves and leadership we now have in place, the challenges and facts are still daunting. We use the last section to remind you that focus on K-12 public education remains critical to a future strong Nevada.

A Superintendent Search

2010 was another year of innovation and progress in Clark County. Nearly 5 years in the Superintendent's position, Dr. Walt Rulffes announced his retirement and a search was announced for his replacement as the leader of a nearly 340,000 student district, the 5th largest in the U.S. We thank Dr. Rulffes for his openness for enhanced communication with the community and for his leadership to establish the empowerment school system.

Selected to succeed in the position was Mr. Dwight D. Jones, commissioner of education from the state of Colorado. He brings with him an impressive breadth of experience and passion for the challenges that lie ahead for him and the entire community as we continue to better position ourselves to deliver a more educated workforce to Nevada.

Dwight D. Jones

Superintendent, Clark County School District

Prior to joining the CCSD in December of 2010, Dwight D. Jones was appointed Colorado's commissioner of education in June 2007 by a unanimous vote of the Colorado State Board of Education. Under his guidance, the department refocused its efforts on serving and supporting the field, partnering with schools and districts on various initiatives, and striving to direct resources and intervention strategies to the districts with the most need.

Jones has spent his career in public education throughout the country. He started as an elementary school teacher in Junction City, Kan., and went on to serve as principal for elementary, middle and high schools, as well as an assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in Wichita, Kan. Following his career in Wichita, Jones was an operational vice president for Edison Schools, where he supervised 11 schools in Kansas, Missouri and Maryland. He served in this role for three years before leaving to become assistant superintendent and later superintendent of Fountain-Fort Carson School District, during which time he earned statewide recognition for narrowing and eliminating achievement gaps related to children from ethnic minority and low-economic backgrounds.

In July 2009 the Education and Resource Development Institute recognized Jones for this work when they named him the Excellence in Education Administrator of the Year.

Jones has served on a number of governor-appointed commissions and at present serves on the Southwest Comprehensive Center's advisory board, the boards of Denver's Children's Hospital, McREL and High School Futures, as well as the Colorado Council on the Arts. He is a current co-chair of NCATE's Blue Ribbon Panel on



Teacher Effectiveness, and last year participated on an international benchmarking advisory board co-sponsored by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. He is also a member of Education Commission of the States steering committee.

CCSD Empowerment System

The Empowerment School (ES) system is now in its 5th year of existence in the CCSD. Today, more than 30 elementary, middle and high schools throughout the CCSD now function within this framework in which nearly 30,000 students are taught. Now, more than 5 years into this new, decentralized approach to budgeting, staffing and curriculum decision making at the school level in exchange for agreed-upon annual student achievement and climate outcomes, the simple question must be asked:

When we implement the Empowerment System in a Centralized School (CS), does student achievement improve?

The UNLV Center for Evaluation and Assessment was contracted by the CCSD to evaluate for Empowerment Schools over three-year period to answer this question. The study began in 2006 and the final report was delivered in February, 2010. Following are Summary Findings and Conclusions regarding the efficacy of continuing the Empowerment System model in the CCSD K-12 education system.

What are the components of a CCSD Empowerment School?

- More Autonomy
- Hire and fire school personnel
- Select school curriculum materials and programs
- Create new school structures and select new programs
- Create new governance structures
- Influence instructional approaches
- More Accountability-specific achievement
- Targets were identified, with an incentive of 2% of pay to be awarded if student achievement and school outcomes met
- Smaller Class Size-reduced to a student / teacher ratio of 25 to 1 in grades 4 and 5
- Additional Time—29 minutes per teacher per day and 5 more days per teacher per year
- Increased Funding-\$175,000 in discretionary funds; 5% pay increase for ES principals; 2% incentive pay for all licensed staff when goals are met; additional support from community partner

Third Grade Reading and Mathematics Scores

Bolded red numbers indicate scores numerically above the District mean.

School	Reading	School	Math
Antonello	321.2	Culley	324.9
Adams	319.2	Antonello	321.2
Culley	307.2	Adams	314.0
Warren	276.6	Warren	299.2
District Mean			316.7

Fourth Grade Reading and Mathematics Scores

Bolded red numbers indicate scores numerically above the District mean.

School	Reading	School	Math
Antonello	351.7	Adams	390.2
Adams	321.3	Antonello	374.3
Culley	313.5	Culley	374.2
Warren	278.1	Warren	350.1
District Mean			330.9

Fifth Grade Reading and Mathematics Scores

Bolded red numbers indicate scores numerically above the District mean.

School	Reading	School	Math
Antonello	320.1	Antonello	334.4
Culley	292.0	Culley	330.4
Adams	290.7	Adams	312.9
Warren	274.3	Warren	305
District Mean	294.5		319

CCSD Empowerment Schools Study

February 15, 2010

Report Summary and Commentary

Student Achievement Data

- As a group, students from ES's significantly outperformed students from CS's in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade SCRT reading and mathematics.

Empowerment Study

- As a group, students who were in the ES's for all three years (3rd -5th grade) as a cohort scored significantly higher than CS's in SCRT at all levels.

The Role of Principal Leadership Style

- ES Principals clustered around elements of shared staffing and curriculum are shared with the whole staff. CS Principals represented a more principal-focused perspective concerning making major decisions.

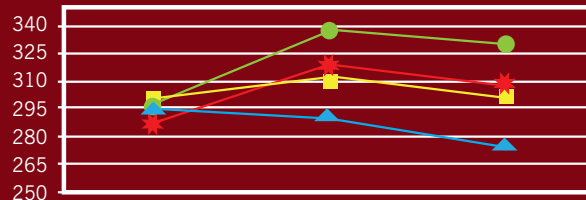
Teacher's Responses to the ES Innovation

- Teachers at all four of the ES's reported a generally good sense of shared vision and shared governance at their school as they implemented and operated in an innovation model.

Parental Engagement

- Parents in general reported positive feelings about ES's, perceived all of the ES's as having high performance expectations for their children, and that their children were receiving a high quality education.

Scale to Score

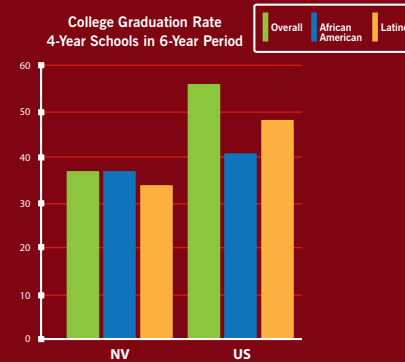


Change from Third to Fifth Grade in Reading and Mathematics Averages

Grade	3rd	4th	5th
ESS Read	300.01	310.44	301.32
Comp Read	290.88	290.32	274.6
ESS Math	296.58	338.1	330.44
Comp Math	285.69	316.92	307.6

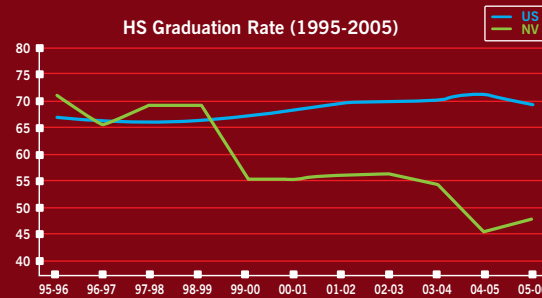
Facing the Future with Facts

- **50** Percentage of students graduating in Nevada
- **220,000** Number of students out of 440,000 who do not reach graduation
- **50** Nevada's national ranking of college graduates in four years
- **1** Nevada's national ranking in high-school drop-outs
- **50** Nevada's national ranking in jobs available for college graduates
- **3** Nevada's national ranking in employing high school drop-outs



Nevada is not alone: The national drop-out issue

- 1.2 million students dropout of school each year
- 7,000 teens become high school dropouts every school day
- High correlation with being jobless, homeless & in prison
- Earn \$260,000 less than H.S. graduates over a lifetime
- Cost nation \$209,000 each for healthcare, welfare and crime
- We incur \$1.5 billion in future losses every school day



Source: K-12 Education and Economic Development

To learn more information about the empowerment system in the CCSD, go to www.cbnonline.org.



Engagement Issues Judicial Selection



2010 Election Judicial Selection Ballot Question #1

Following a bi-partisan effort led by Speaker Barbara Buckley and Senate Majority Leader Bill Raggio over the 2007 and 2009 legislative sessions, Question #1 was placed on the ballot and asked voters about their support or opposition to shifting selected Nevada elected judiciary offices to an appointment and retain by election process. A campaign was formed to support the effort. In the end, the question was defeated by a wide margin, 42.26% (285,746 votes) to 57.74% (390,370 votes).

The following text appeared on the voter ballot for consideration:

Shall the Nevada Constitution be amended to provide for the appointment of Supreme Court justices and District Court judges by the Governor for their initial terms from lists of candidates nominated by the commission on Judicial Selection, with subsequent retention of those justices and judges after independent performance evaluations and voter approval?

While no method of judicial selection is ever perfect, the Council was supportive of Question 1 and a revision of the state's current process surrounding the selection of the judiciary in various positions. Beyond the outcome of the ballot question in the 2010 cycle, the fact remains that our courts make decisions that impact virtually every aspect of our personal and professional lives. According to the National Center for State Courts, approximately 100 million cases are heard in state and local courts each year. Ninety-seven percent of the cases heard in the U.S. are heard by state judges. Nevadans expect and deserve to be treated fairly in any court of law in which they enter.

Polling data consistently reveals Americans value fairness in the court process more than they do fairness in case outcomes.

In the last four election cycles, candidates for state high courts have raised nearly double the amount raised by candidates in the 1990's.

69% of the public believes that raising money for elections affects a judge's rulings to a moderate or great extent.

State legislators are the key to continued reforms and playing a vital role in ensuring Nevada's state court system is based in fairness, impartiality and transparency.

They can propose changes to judicial selection and retention methods or introduce reforms to improve these processes

- They can create new judgeships and staff positions to respond to increased caseloads
- They can pass laws to reinforce court decisions or clarify legislative intent
- They can express public support for the work of their judiciaries and act promptly to address threats to the courts should they arise



Engagement Issues Initiative & Referendum



CBNonline.org

The Council for a Better Nevada has always been interested in transparent and accountable governance impacting quality of life issues for Nevadans. Initiative and Referendum ballot propositions are an important vehicle that allows citizens another voice outside of the representative democracy process. Since 2005, the Council has worked to ensure the initiative and referendum process is a fair, transparent and honest alternative governance approach for the people of Nevada.

History of Initiative & Referendum in Nevada

Through 2010, a total of 54 citizen-initiated ballot propositions have appeared on Nevada's ballot since the beginning of the process in 1918. Of those, 34 passed and 20 failed. During the most recent 2010 campaign cycle, there were 4 legislative-referred ballot questions on the ballot, of which none passed. There were 11 citizen-initiated initiatives proposed but none qualified for the ballot.

How I&R began in Nevada

In 1905, an amendment giving voters the power of referendum was approved by the Nevada legislature and ratified by the voters by a margin of five to one.

By 1909, initiative supporters included acting governor Denver S. Dickerson and U.S. Senator Francis G. Newlands, architect of the Newlands Reclamation Act of 1901, which set up the Federal Bureau of Reclamation and provided for the construction of dams and canals to irrigate the arid lands of the western states. An amendment establishing the initiative process passed the legislature and was approved by Nevada voters in 1912.

1922 to the Present

The first initiative to pass was a Prohibition statute, approved by a 59 percent majority in 1918. In 1922, a change in the divorce law was initiated by petition, sparking the legislature to place its own alternative measure on the ballot. The legislature's version passed, and the initiative lost. In 1936, Nevadans rejected a pension initiative by a margin of nearly three to one, but they changed their minds eight years later and approved by a 53.5 percent margin another initiative to increase the state's old-age benefits.

Right to Work

During the 1950s business interests and labor unions clashed in three successive elections over the "Right to Work" issue. Organized labor lost in all three elections. The battle began in 1952, when voters approved a "Right to Work" measure by a slim 50.7 percent margin. Labor unions fought back with a 1954 initiative to repeal the new law; Nevada voters defeated it by a narrow margin of 51.4 percent. A second union-sponsored repeal initiative on the 1956 ballot was rejected by a 53.9 percent margin. Another union-backed initiative on the same ballot sought to amend the state constitution to prohibit "Right to Work" laws, but was rejected by an even more decisive margin of 57 percent.

Signature Requirements Initiative

In 1958, business interests responded with their own initiative to end the dispute in employers' favor, simply by making it more difficult to put initiatives on the ballot and more difficult to pass them. Approved by a 61.9 percent majority, the new provision required that initiative petitions meet signature quotas in three-quarters of the state's 17 counties. No more could



initiative proponents get all the signatures they needed from the heavily populated Las Vegas and Reno areas. Another new requirement specified that initiatives to amend the constitution be approved by voters twice, in two successive elections, before taking effect. Nevada is the only state with such a requirement.

1982 - Present

In 1982, an initiative spurred the legislature to pass a similar bill of its own creating a consumer advocates' office to deal with utility matters. Both measures were on the ballot, but sponsors of the initiative liked the legislature's version so much that they campaigned against their own! Not surprisingly, the legislature's measure won the approval of the voters.

In 1998, medical marijuana was legalized via the initiative process as was a ban on same sex marriage in 2000.

Laws governing the initiative process in Nevada

Citizens of Nevada can use the initiative process to:

Propose an initiated constitutional amendment.

If the petition is sufficient, the amendment is placed on the next general election ballot. Nevada is the only I&R state to require voters to approve a proposed amendment twice, requiring voter approval in two successive elections before the amendment becomes law. The language, description, arguments, and question number must be the same on both ballots. If the question passes the second time, it becomes part of the Nevada Constitution upon certification of the election results. If the question fails to pass a second time, no further action is taken.

Propose an indirect initiated state statute.

Citizens petition to propose a new law or a change to an existing state law. If the petition is sufficient, the Nevada Secretary of State transmits the petition to the next regular session of the legislature when it convenes. The petition must be enacted or rejected by the legislature without change within 40 days.

- If the petition is enacted by the legislature and approved by the Governor, it becomes law.
- If the legislature does not act upon or rejects the petition within 40 days, the Secretary of State shall place the measure on next general election ballot for the voters to decide.
- If the Legislature rejects a petition and proposes a different measure on the same subject, which the Governor approves, the measure proposed by the Legislature and approved by the Governor must also be listed on the ballot along with the original statutory initiative. If both the initiative and the legislative substitute are approved by the voters, the one receiving the highest number of affirmative votes becomes law.

Nullify a law enacted by the Nevada State Legislature through the veto referendum process.

Affirm a state law through the statute affirmation process, which is unique to Nevada.

If the petition is sufficient, the state law at issue will be submitted to voters on the next general election ballot. If the state law is disapproved, it becomes void. If the state law is approved—unlike with traditional veto referendum where the state law would simply remain in force—Nevada law, unique among the I & R states,

provides that the law shall not be amended, annulled, repealed, set aside, suspended, or in any way made inoperative except by the direct vote of the people.

Features of the Law

Filing requirements: Prior to circulating a petition for signatures, a copy of the petition and a short description (200 words or less) must be filed with the Nevada Secretary of State. The Secretary of State reviews the petition for acceptable format, but does not review or approve the language contained on the petition. Proponents are advised to seek their own legal advice regarding the measure's language and content. Opponents of the measure can file court challenges if they feel the measure's language has legal problems.

When the measure qualifies for the ballot, the Secretary of State writes the Ballot Summary and Ballot Question; and the Attorney General reviews and comments on both. While writing them, the Secretary of State holds public gatherings to obtain input from proponents, opponents and the general public. There is no official process for challenging the Secretary of State's Title and Summary, other than challenging them in court.

Single-subject rule: Nevada has a single-subject rule, which requires that an initiative deal with "only a single subject and matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto." This rule applies to all county and municipal initiatives as well.

Appropriations of Money

The Nevada Constitution does not permit the proposal of any statute or statutory amendment which makes an appropriation or otherwise requires the expenditure of money, unless the statute or amendment also imposes a sufficient tax not prohibited by the constitution or

otherwise constitutionally provides for raising the necessary revenue.

Deadlines

- The deadline for an initiated constitutional amendment is the first day the Secretary of State will accept filings for constitutional amendments is September 1st of the year prior to the year the measure is to appear on the general election ballot. Petition signatures must be filed for verification with each County Clerk/Registrar no later than 90 days prior to the next general election. All petitions for the measure must be submitted on the same day.
- The deadline for a statutory initiative is the first day the Secretary of State will accept filings for statutory initiatives is January 1 of the year prior to next regular session of the legislature. Petition signatures must be filed for verification with each County Clerk/Registrar no later than 30 days prior to next regular session of the legislature. All petitions for the measure must be submitted on the same day.
- The deadline for a veto referendum is the first day the Secretary of State will accept filings for veto referenda for is August 1. Petition signatures must be filed for verification with each County Clerk/Registrar no later than 120 days prior to the next general election. All petitions for the measure must be submitted on the same day.
- Statute affirmation follows the same process as a veto referendum, but proponents are seeking a "yes" vote rather than the "no" vote sought by proponents of a traditional veto referendum.

Distribution Requirement

Nevada has been struggling for years over its distribution requirement. In *ACLU v. Lomax* in 2006, the “thirteen counties rule” was invalidated by the Ninth Circuit.

In 2007, the Nevada State Legislature passed a new distribution requirement in Nevada Senate Bill 549, which according to the ACLU was “virtually identical” to the law struck down in *ACLU v. Lomax*. On September 28, 2008, U.S. District Court Judge Philip Pro invalidated Nevada Senate Bill 549 (2007), saying it is unconstitutional. Judge Pro ordered Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller not to enforce the law.

In 2009, the legislature passed another distribution requirement. The new requirement is that circulators must collect the signatures of 10 percent of the turnout in the most recent election in each of the state’s Congressional districts. This makes the overall number of signatures required to qualify an initiative for the ballot 60% higher.

Signature Verification

Nevada uses a random sampling system for verification. If more than 500 signatures have been submitted, the County Clerk/Registrar will randomly sample 500 or five percent of the signatures, whichever is greater.

Campaign Finance

The features of Nevada’s campaign finance laws include

- Groups in support or opposition of a ballot measure are treated differently than Political Action Committees.
- Groups must report money spent towards paid signature circulators.
- Groups must have an official representative designated when conducting business with the Nevada Secretary of State.
- Groups must report any person who has contributed \$1,000 or more during the campaign to the Nevada Secretary of State.

Proposed Changes

There were no proposals made in 2010 by members of the Nevada Legislature.

Legislative Tampering:

The Nevada State Legislature can only repeal or amend initiated state statutes three years after they have been enacted.

Residency

People circulating petitions in Nevada are not required to be Nevada residents or registered voters.



Nevada signature requirements for initiative petitions:

- Signatures for a statewide measure must equal 10% of total votes cast in last general election.
- Nevada is one of three states (the others are Colorado and Massachusetts) that doesn't require a higher percentage for constitutional amendments compared to the percentage for a statutory initiative.
- To recall an elected official in Nevada, 25% of registered voters who lives in the district represented by the officeholder being recalled are required.
- For a proposed amendment, the signature filing deadline for the November 2010 ballot was June 15, 2010. All signatures were required to be submitted to county clerks/registrars. County clerks then had to verify and submit the signatures to the secretary of state by no later than August 4, 2010.

Signature Requirements

Year	Amendment	Statute	Veto Referendum
2010	97,002	97,002	97,002
2008	58,627	58,627	58,627

Distribution Requirements

The current distribution requirement in Nevada (as of 2010) is:

- 10% of total votes cast in most recent general election in each of Nevada's congressional districts, plus at least 18 signatures from Clark County
- 10% of total votes cast in most recent general election in each of Nevada's congressional districts, plus at least 18 signatures from Clark County

Nevada once required that signatures come from 10% of the total votes cast in the last general election in at least 13 of the state's 17 counties. The geographic distribution requirement was held unconstitutional by a federal court in August 2004 in the case of ACLU v. Lomax.

The Nevada State Legislature then enacted Senate Bill 549 in 2007 which incorporates a stringent new distribution requirement. On February 14, 2008, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the Marijuana Policy Project challenging the constitutionality of SB 549.

On September 28, 2008, U.S. District Court Judge Philip Pro invalidated Nevada Senate Bill 549 (2007), saying it is unconstitutional, and ordering Secretary



of State Ross Miller not to enforce it. The Nevada State Legislature responded by enacting a law that bases the distribution requirement primarily on U.S. Congressional districts.

After Petitions are Verified

Once a measure qualifies for the ballot, the Secretary of State writes the Ballot Summary and Ballot Question after holding public gatherings to obtain input from proponents, opponents, and the general public. The Attorney General reviews and comments on both. There is no official process for challenging the Secretary of State's Title and Summary, other than challenging them in court.

Constitutional Amendments

If the petition is sufficient, the initiative is placed on the general election ballot. If the voters approve the amendment, the Secretary of State will resubmit the question for a vote of the people at the next general election. The language, description, arguments, and question number must be the same on both ballots. If the question passes the second time, it becomes part of the Nevada Constitution upon certification of the election results. If the question fails to pass a second time, no further action is taken.

Statutory Initiatives

If the petition is sufficient, the Secretary of State transmits the petition to the next legislative session when it convenes. The petition must be enacted or rejected by the legislature without change within 40 days.

- If the petition is enacted by the legislature and approved by the Governor, it becomes law.
- If the legislature does not act upon or rejects the petition within 40 days, the Secretary of State shall place the measure on next general election ballot for the voters to decide.
- If the Legislature rejects a petition and proposes a different measure on the same subject, which the Governor approves, the measure proposed by the Legislature and approved by the Governor must also be listed on the ballot along with the original statutory initiative. If both the initiative and the legislative substitute are approved by the voters, the one receiving the highest number of affirmative votes becomes law.

Veto Referenda

If the petition is sufficient, it will be submitted to voters on the next general election ballot. If the state law at issue is approved, it remains the law of the state and shall not be amended, annulled, repealed, set aside, suspended, or in any way made inoperative except by the direct vote of the people. (This is the process known as **statute affirmation**.) If the state law is disapproved, it becomes void.

Enrichment Issues


Southern Nevada Mass Transportation

Source:

Southern Nevada Regional Transportation Plan 2009-2030

“There are years that
speak to us and others that **listen.**”

Unknown Author

A vibrant sky with a rainbow and dramatic clouds. The sky is a deep blue, with a bright rainbow arching across the upper right. Large, dark, billowing clouds are scattered throughout, with a bright sunburst breaking through a gap in the clouds near the center-right. The bottom of the image shows a soft, orange and pinkish glow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

“Pessimists are usually right and optimists are usually wrong but all the great changes in history have been accomplished by optimists.”

Thomas Friedman
American Journalist, Columnist and Author





Enrichment Issues Southern Nevada Mass Transportation



Regional planning for Southern Nevada’s transportation needs has been a daunting task over the last 20 years with the metro region being the fastest growing in the nation, with more than 2 million citizens living in the valley today and more than 40 million visitors coming to Las Vegas every year. Future prospects present similar needs for complex and new thinking about how we move people in and around our community more efficiently.

Southern Nevada’s Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is both the transit authority and the transportation planning agency for southern Nevada. In addition to the transit authority responsibilities, there are various other functions the RTC performs: Designated under federal law as the **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

- The RTC is also responsible for overseeing the transportation planning process for Southern Nevada. It is one of the few agencies in the nation that serves as the street and highway planning and funding agency, the regional freeway and arterial traffic management agency, and the regional transit provider.
- In addition, the RTC directs funding generated from various local, state, and federal funds for transportation purposes.
- The RTC is also the- regional transit agency providing services for the general public and paratransit for disabled persons
- The RTC operates the Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation (FAST). FAST monitors and controls traffic in the valley.

The RTC’s current leader, General Manager Jacob Snow has led the agency since 1999 and provided the Council with a broad view of the RTC’s future planning through its Southern Nevada Regional Transportation Plan 2009-2030 (RTP)

What is the RTC’s vision for transportation in Southern Nevada?

The RTC’s vision is to “provide a safe, convenient and effective regional transportation system that enhances mobility and air quality for citizens and visitors.”

What are the RTC’s long range goals to support this vision?

- Implement transportation systems that improve air quality and protect the environment
- Reduce greenhouse gas carbon footprint
- Provide for urban sustainability
- Develop fully integrated model options
- Enhance the efficiency of existing transportation facilities
- Improve access to mass transportation facilities and services
- Secure funding for expansion, operation and maintenance of transportation system routes
- Enhance public awareness and support of the regional transportation system
- Improve safety for all travelers
- Improve security for all travelers
- Support more efficient freight movement

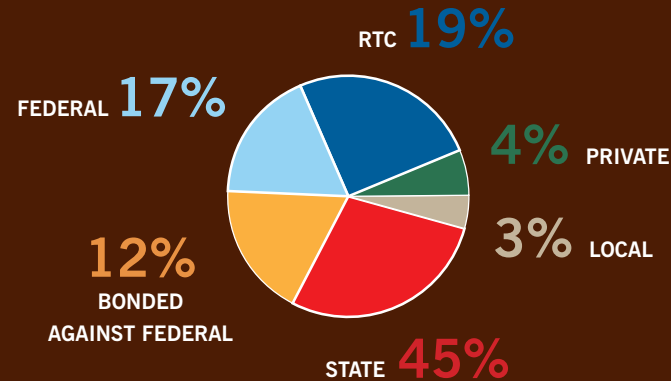
Key Approaches to Addressing Transportation Challenges

- Improve operational efficiency of existing roadways to improve capacity without major capital expense
- Shift as many people as possible out of single-occupant vehicles by encouraging the use of carpools and other measures known as “Travel Demand Management.” (TDM)
- Improve transit options to provide attractive alternatives to the automobile
- Address local transportation challenges to make the environment friendlier for those on foot or riding bicycles

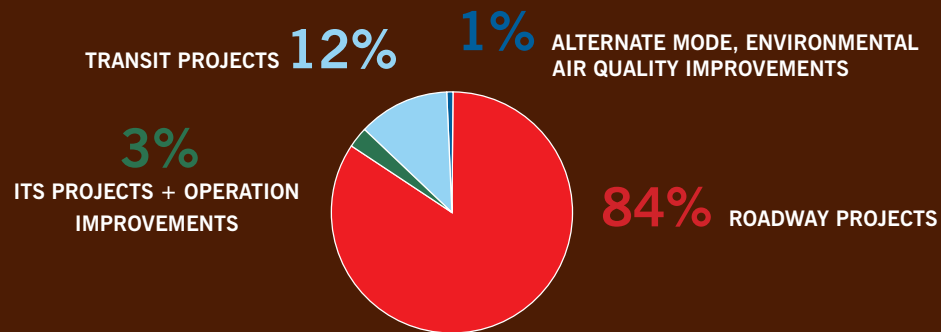
Funding Assumptions and Investment Strategy

- Over the period from 2009-2030, the RTP investment strategy is projected to cost \$16.1 billion in year-of expenditure terms.
- Revenues to support planned transportation investments comes from a variety of public, tax-based sources, raised at either the local, state or federal level. These same sources cover operation and maintenance of the existing system.
- Given current financial challenges and uncertainties about the future, RTC and local jurisdictions have focused resources on those projects yielding the greatest impact.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



Summary of Regional Strategic Investments included in the 2009-2030 Regional Transportation Plan

Total

Regional Strategic Investments **\$13.303 billion**

Street and Highway improvements **\$11.261 billion**

I-15 from the CA State Line to Sloan Rd: widen to 8 lanes	\$200m
I-15 from Sloan Rd to Tropicana Ave: Widen to 10 lanes	1043
I-15 south: New interchanges	406
I-15 resort corridor: Widen and add carpool lanes	878
I-15 Project Neon	1080
I-515 from College Dr to I-15: Widen to 10 lanes; new interchanges	3184
US 93/US 95 from US 95 interchange to I-515 at Foothills: Construct 4-lane freeway	237
US 95 from Rainbow Blvd to SR.157: Widen and add carpool lanes	463
SR 160 Blue Diamond Rd from Decatur Blvd to Mountain Springs: Widening	125
SR 564 Lake Mead Pkwy from Boulder Hwy to Lake Las Vegas: Widen to 6 lanes	41
CC 215 Bruce Woodbury Beltway: Upgrade to full freeway	1209
Ivanpah Airport access roads and interchanges	381 (A)
Laughlin: Construct new bridge across the Colorado River	64
Martin Luther King Blvd from Industrial Rd south of Oakey Blvd to north of Alta Dr: Construct 6-lane roadway and overpass across I-15	50
North 5th St from Owens Ave to CC 215: Construct 8-lane road with interchanges	287
Oakey Blvd/ Wyoming Ave: Construct grade separation at UPRR	78
Sheep Mtn Pkwy from CC 215 to US 95: Construct 4-lane road and interchanges	183
Summerlin Pkwy from CC 215 to US 95: Widen to 8 lanes including carpool lanes	100
Tropicana Ave from Decatur Blvd to I-15: Widen and grade separate at Dean Martin Dr	169
Other street and highway projects	382

ITS Deployment + Operational improvements **\$387 million**

I-515 from I-215 to Charleston Blvd: FAST ITS deployment	\$22m
Regional freeway and arterial ITS system development	144
Intersection and signal improvements	47
NDOT freeway service patrol and incident management	49
NDOT FAST system operations	125

Transit Capital Improvements, Including Park-and-Ride **\$1.537 billion**

Boulder Hwy: Bus Rapid Transit	\$72m
Las Vegas Monorail from McCarran Airport to MGM Grand: Extend Monorail	450 (M)
Las Vegas Blvd South: Bus Rapid Transit	13
North 5th St: Bus Rapid Transit	13
RTC Transit: system development	31
Park-and-Ride and transit center development	29
RTC Transit: bus and paratransit fleet expansion and replacement	853
Other transit projects	77

Alternate Mode, Environmental + Air Quality Improvements **\$118 million**

RTC "Club Ride" Travel Demand Management program	\$36m
Emissions reduction projects	27
Bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements	40
Other environmental improvement projects	16

Non-regionally significant projects not listed in the RTP **\$2.261 billion**

Total Transportation Capital Program, 2009-2030 **\$15.564 billion**

(A) Funded by the Clark County Department of Aviation

(M) Funded by the Las Vegas Monorail Company





Demographics

Las Vegas 2009

Sources:

Las Vegas Perspective



“The persistence of optimism in a desperate situation is not only preferred, but required.”

Author Unknown





Demographics Las Vegas 2009



POPULATION

	2007	2008	2009	% CHANGE	
				07/08	08/09
Boulder City	16,206	16,840	16,511	3.9%	-2.05
Henderson	265,790	272,063	275,134	2.4%	1.1%
Las Vegas	603,093	599,087	607,876	-0.7%	1.5%
North Las Vegas	215,026	216,672	221,003	0.8%	2.0%
Mesquite	19,194	19,939	21,253	3.9%	6.6%
Unincorp. Rural	35,881	32,930	32,259	-8.2%	-2.0%
Unincorp. Urban	841,452	828,615	832,310	-1.5%	0.4%
TOTAL CLARK COUNTY	1,996,542	1,986,146	2,006,347	-0.5%	1.0%



MCCARRAN INT'L AIRPORT

YEAR	TOTAL	YEAR	TOTAL
2000	44,2267	2005	44,2267
2001	44,2267	2006	46,193
2002	44,2267	2007	47,728
2003	44,2267	2008	44,075
2004	44,2267	2009	40,469



CLARK COUNTY LABOR FORCE SUMMARY

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	CHANGE*
Labor Force	705.6	727.5	759.6	783.7	805.6	836.8	873.4	917.4	953.6	968.5	982.5	1.4%
Employment	676.0	693.9	717.6	737.3	762.2	798.4	837.0	879.0	907.7	904.1	865.1	-4.3%
Unemployment	29.8	33.6	41.9	46.4	43.4	38.5	36.4	38.4	45.9	64.4	117.4	82.3%
Unemployment Rate	4.2%	4.6%	5.5%	5.9%	5.4%	4.6%	4.2%	4.2%	4.8%	6.7%	12.0%	



RESIDENT PROFILE DATA

RACE / ETHNICITY

White	52.5%
Hispanic / Latino	28.0%
Black / African American	9.2%
Asian	6.2%
American Indian / Alaska Native	0.6%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0.4%
Other or More Than One Race	3.2%

GENDER

Male	50.5%
Female	49.5%
Male / Female Ratio	1.02%

EDUCATION

Less than 9th Grade	6.5%
Some High School, No Diploma	11.8%
High School Graduate (GED)	30.8%
Some College, No Degree	26.1%
Associate Degree	6.1%
Bachelor's Degree	12.3%
Master's Degree	5.2%
Professional School Degree	0.8%
Doctorate Degree	0.3%

HOUSING UNIT TYPES

Single Family	58.9%
Condominiums	10.3%
Townhouses	4.9%
Plexes (2-4 Units)	2.4%
Mobile Homes	3.6%
Apartments	19.9%

MATERIAL STATUS

Never Married	26.1%
Married, Spouse Present	50.0%
Married, Spouse Absent	5.5%
Widowed	5.2%
Divorced	13.2%

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Under 18	25.5%
18 to 24	8.7%
25 to 34	14.6%
35 to 44	14.8%
45 to 54	13.8%
55 to 64	11.0%
65 and Over	11.5%
Average Age	36
Median Age	35.3

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Less than \$15,000	8.8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	8.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	10.5%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	15.3%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	22.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	14.6%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	12.9%
\$150,000 - \$249,999	5.3%
\$250,000 and Over	1.9%
Average Household Income	\$72,582
Median Household Income	\$58,148

PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

1	22.8%
2	34.6%
3	16.9%
4	12.9%
5	7.0%
6	3.2%
7 or More	2.5%
Average Persons per Household	2.73%





MAJOR REASONS FOR LIVING IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

REASON	PERCENT
To find a job	18.4%
Job transfer	18.2%
To live near relatives	9.6%
Like the area	8.0%
Born here	6.0%
For a better lifestyle	5.2%
Retirement	3.8%
Health reasons	2.8%



TAXES CONCERN

Not at all concerned	7.4%
Not too concerned	12.6%
Somewhat concerned	31.9%
Very Concerned	48.9%



GIVEN RECENT CONCERN OVER STATE BUDGET SHORTFALLS, WHICH ONE IS YOUR NUMBER ONE STATE FUNDING PRIORITY?

Educating children	59.1%
Public Health / welfare programs	12.8%
Keeping criminals in prison	12.8%
College attendance opportunities	6.9%
Other	5.3%
Alleviate traffic congestion	3.0%





“I can’t understand why people are frightened
of new ideas. *I’m frightened of the old ones.*”

John Milton Cage
American Composer of Avant-Garde Music

Time Capsule

The American Guide To The Silver State

Sources:

U.S. Senate: The American Guide Series Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State
The American Guide to the Silver State



**“History never looks like history
when you’re living through it.”**

John W. Gardner
Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare
Under President Lyndon B. Johnson, Founder, Common Cause





Time Capsule The American Guide To The Silver State



The American Guide Series of books was produced by the Federal Writers Project between 1935 and 1943. The Federal Writers Project was one of many programs under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a Depression-era government program that assisted the millions of unemployed. The series is said to have originated from a casual cocktail party conversation between writer Katharine Kellock and WPA administrator Arthur Goldsmith. These wonderful travel guides cover the 48 states (Alaska and Hawaii were not yet states) and the District of Columbia and employed over 6,000 writers. Each volume covers a state's history, geography, and culture, and includes photographs, maps and drawings.

The Nevada Guide to the Silver State was first published in 1940 by the Nevada Historical Society Inc., the statewide sponsor of the Nevada Writers Project. The Nevada Guide would be "a story of Nevada and its people, past, present, and a mile by mile description of its natural wonders and points of interest." Following is Part I of the book: Nevada's Background. When reading the passage, to think how far we've come in 50 years since this writing, we can only wonder what we will transform ourselves into over the next 50 years to come.

NEVADA

THE SILVER STATE

Nevada is the great unknown. A land of incredible beauty, it covers more than a hundred thousand square miles of brilliantly colored terrain rising in chain after chain of mountains. Many of them lift snow caps ten to thirteen thousand feet or ascend to pinnacles sculptured into weird or striking forms.

Yet relatively few Americans are familiar with this land. If the citizen of other States is asked what he knows about Nevada, he is apt to laugh and mention gambling; on second thought he will add Virginia City, which he remembers from Mark Twain's exaggerated account in "Roughing It". Pressed for the State's physical characteristics, he will usually mention the Great Basin—envisioned as a huge hollow bowl—and then, drawing on his memory of pioneer stories, will say: "Isn't Nevada pretty much desert?" That the State is a mountainous region with a flora rivaling that of California in richness and variety, comes to him as astonishing news. He is further amazed to hear that most of the Boulder Dam-Lake Mead Recreational area is in Nevada; that Californians in large numbers come up to the Reno and Las Vegas areas for winter sports; that the Nevada mountains near the Utah line have well developed lake side campsites at elevations much higher than that of Lake Tahoe; and that the State has a number of towns with populations of less than two thousand where social life has a metropolitan character.

There are various reasons for this vast ignorance about the sixth largest State in the Union, but the chief one has been the reticence of the Nevadans themselves. They have always known their State's great beauty

and are unusually sensitive to it, but humbled by long neglect on the part of the vast traveling public, it is only recently that they have begun to tell the world about Nevada.

Hatred of hypocrisy is an outstanding characteristic of the people of the Silver State, a characteristic which has given rise to misunderstanding. The State had a six-months divorce law long before the rest of the country knew about it. Many Nevadans hold marriage a private contract and believed that if the partners made a mistake they should be given an opportunity to remedy it; furthermore, they believed that the details of a partnership dissolution concerned only the persons involved. However, because of the widespread publicity about Reno divorces, the world does not realize that Nevadans take marriage seriously. Actually, they are as impatient with those who flout marriage as their general tolerance for the world's foibles permits.

The Nevada attitude on gambling is further evidence of their lack of hypocrisy—and is equally misunderstood. Like every other State in the Union, Nevada has always had its games of chance, and was no more successful than any other place in suppressing them. Faced with the great economic collapse and hunting for new sources of revenue that would not burden the population, it decided in 1931 to cut out the costs of ineffective attempts at suppression and at the same time increase State and local incomes by licensing the gambling devices. The law regulating open gambling had teeth, however, and the State keeps no gambling laws on its statute books that it does not enforce.

Only certain games and devices are permitted. The revenue is divided between the State and the counties, or between the State, county, and city or town in which the license is granted. The statute provides a maximum penalty of one thousand dollars and six months imprisonment for anyone convicted of running a crooked game. Any proprietor of a gambling house who allows a minor to gamble at his tables, or even enter his establishment, is liable to the same punishment.

The results of the policy are illuminating. Though visitors occasionally put up large stakes, the local citizens stick to small amounts and, with many opportunities to observe the workings of the law of averages, are restrained in their gambling. Young Nevadans show relatively little interest in the sport when they reach the age that permits them to place counters on the roulette boards and pull slot machine handles. Further, the State is completely free of racketeers, in spite of the large sums handled by some of the clubs, and no Nevada prosecuting attorney has had a chance to make a name for himself by exposing corrupt relations between politicians and gambling club owners.

The State's forthrightness occasionally rouses misunderstanding among visitors, some of whom approach it as though they were entering a scene of vice; and old ladies motoring out to winter in southern California have been known to ask timidly whether it was safe for them to go out on Nevada streets after dark. Such attitudes are totally unjustified. Visitors outside the gambling club districts shortly forget that gambling exists, and in the gaming areas and clubs themselves, law and order are strictly observed.

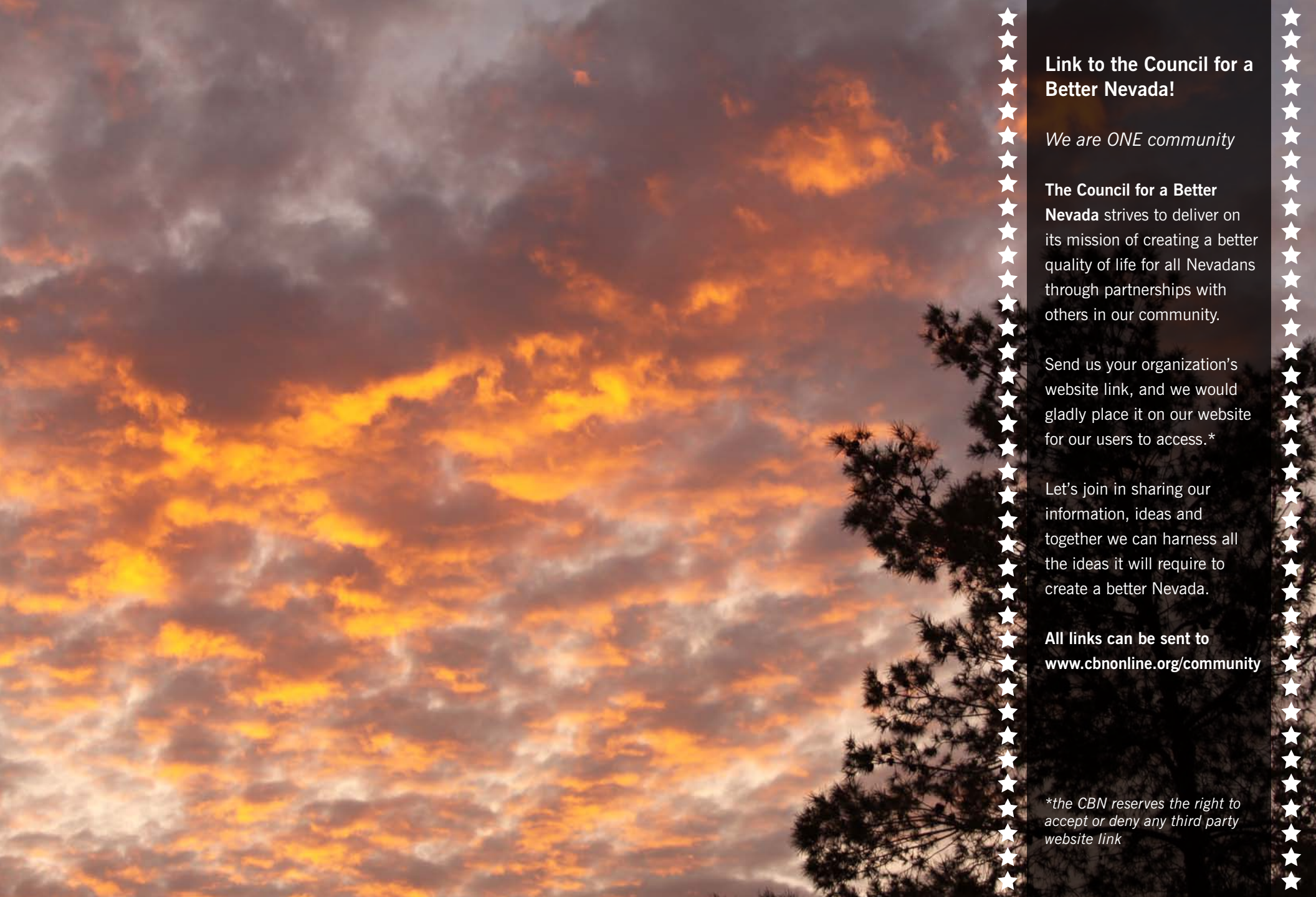
Nevadans never force themselves on visitors or bombard them with inducements to visit this or that place in the State. Their courtesy is expressed quietly,

and when they offer favors they do it with sincerity.

Another Nevada trait is an addiction to eating at counters. It is doubtful whether there is a restaurant in the State without one; even the smartest places feature counters. Usually the board is high and the stools are mounted on a small platform. No Nevadan is quite sure why he likes "counter-eating"; but the counter offers company—and the true Nevadan is gregarious, as his passion for clubs and other social circles indicates.

The most characteristic Nevada institution is the "club"—even the smallest community has one or two. But the gilded hot spots of the Reno and Las Vegas area are not typical. Basic equipment of the true Nevada club, which is usually in a former store, consists of a bar, a few slot machines, and one or more big round poker tables with low-hanging, green-shaded lamps over their centers. In addition there may be other gaming facilities and a dining counter. Primarily, the club is neither a gambling hall nor a saloon; rather, it is a social center similar in some ways to the continental café or beerhall. While a few habitués take at least one drink daily, or drop a coin into the slot machines—in lieu of club dues—they often wander in and out several times a day without spending money. As a rule windows are uncurtained and passersby need not even enter to discover whether friends are inside. While the majority of those frequenting the clubs are men, the presence of women draws neither comment nor notice.

Nevada offers many variations from the national pattern, both in its physical aspects and in its people. There is no monotony of scene and though the towns are scattered, most of them have an individuality that repays exploration, a few a charm that makes their discoverers want to keep them unknown lest they be spoiled. But Nevada is large, its people content with their way of life, so it is unlikely that even large numbers of visitors will change its essential quality.



Link to the Council for a Better Nevada!

We are ONE community

The Council for a Better Nevada strives to deliver on its mission of creating a better quality of life for all Nevadans through partnerships with others in our community.

Send us your organization's website link, and we would gladly place it on our website for our users to access.*

Let's join in sharing our information, ideas and together we can harness all the ideas it will require to create a better Nevada.

All links can be sent to www.cbnonline.org/community

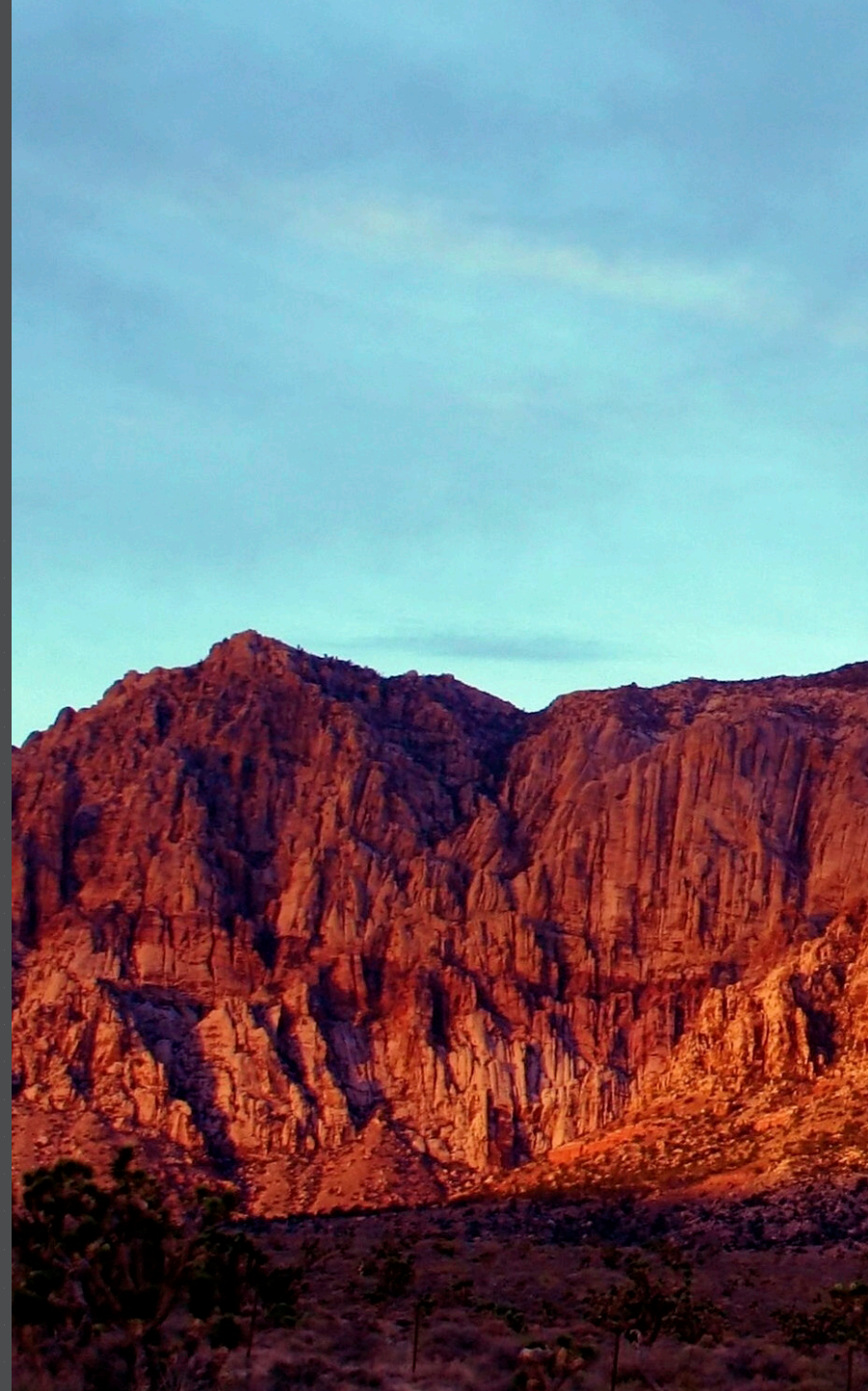
**the CBN reserves the right to accept or deny any third party website link*

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