

## GROWTH CONTINUES IN THE MOJAVE RIVER VALLEY-BRIGHTLINE

A population boom has brought houses, companies and retailers to the High Desert also known as the Mojave River Valley.

The "High Desert" used to be a term that referred to one area: the northern region of San Bernardino County that is beyond the Cajon Pass. As such, many other "High Desert" popped up, including the nearby Joshua Tree Area, in addition to namesakes in Arizona, Nevada and Oregon.

That led this particular area to be rebranded as the Mojave River Valley, notes Joseph W. Brady, president of The Bradco Companies in Victorville, Calif. As a long-time, 35-year resident, of the Mojave River Valley, he is the longest serving commercial broker in the region.

### What is the current state of commercial real estate in the Mojave River Valley?

Retail is rather steady, with each of the cities — Apple Valley, Adelanto, Hesperia, and Victorville — all seizing new opportunities for commercial. Sprouts grocery stores (remodel of the former Toys"R"Us) are coming into Victorville and the Town of Apple Valley. We also have many smaller national tenants that continue to expand in the retail marketplace. Retail vacancy levels continue to drop, and rents are increasing.

The major push in the last two years has been industrial. Most of the major large parcels of land within the five incorporated cities that have utilities are under contract. The Valley has a base industrial market of about 28 million square feet, with nearly 3 million square feet recently completed at Southern California Logistics Airport. This includes Amazon, Iron Mountain and Mars' pet division. Master developer Covington Capital recently developed three parcels in Hesperia totaling nearly 221 acres. Modway has already completed their building within this master plan, which is over a million square feet, while Exeter recently signed a 10-year lease with Fellowship Warehousing. That building is 1.1 million square feet and recently completed.

### What impact do you believe the Brightline Speed train will have on the Mojave River Valley?

We expect a large surge in growth due to the prospect that Brightline's "Speed Train" will be funded before end of December. Brightline has received all its approvals and permits and is just waiting on government funding now, which will hopefully be received by the end of the year. The \$10 billion project, which will take four years to complete, will connect Rancho Cucamonga to Hesperia, then Apple Valley and then the Las Vegas Strip.

### Where do opportunities lie for commercial investors and developers?

There is a huge need for multifamily and workforce housing as the Brightline project moves forward and the Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) railway works on its 4,500-acre Barstow Integrated Gateway (BIG) in Barstow that is expected to create about 22,000 jobs. We have a huge lack of multifamily housing to satisfy the desires of many of these workers.

### What are the benefits of investing and developing in the Mojave River Valley?

The benefits of developing in the High Desert/Mojave River Valley are that you have five very pro-growth cities that want good, well-planned and well-thought-out development. While the cities must work under federal and state guidelines, they are more pro-growth than many of the cities down below. We also have our own Air District, the Mohave Desert Air Quality Management District, which is far less restrictive than the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

### What are the challenges?

I believe the cities need to work more cooperatively with the development community on infrastructure projects. The cities ultimately need to come together, for example, to work on a major road that encircles the region. Victor Valley Community College is facing a discussion with Assemblyman Juan Carrillo, Tom Lackey and State Senate Scott Wilk.

### Where do you see this High Desert heading in the next few years?

I moved from Santa Barbara to the High Desert Mojave River Valley 35 years ago. When I came here, there were about 125,000 people within what we now call the five incorporated cities (Hesperia and Apple Valley were not incorporated until 1989.) We have over 550,00 people in the region now, including Barstow. I absolutely believe without a doubt, that the Valley will double in size in the next 25 years thanks to efforts like The Brightline West project, the BNSF project and Silverwood Master Planned Community in Hesperia, which includes approximately 15,663 dwelling units.



Joseph W. Brady,  
CCIM, SIOR  
President  
The Bradco Companies

## THE CITIES OF THE MOJAVE RIVER VALLEY

*Brady outlines the commercial activity driving each of the five cities that comprise this High Desert region.*

### Adelanto:

Adelanto had a large amount of industrial production until Southern California Logistics Airport was created. Marijuana cultivation business have also done well here. There are nearly 4 million square feet of cultivation buildings within the region. There is a very low vacancy factor.

The city is also working on a new Holiday Inn Express, a potential Hispanic grocery store and many other major retail uses.

The city is currently processing 20 million feet of industrial space.

### Apple Valley:

The Town of Apple Valley experienced serious growth in 2023, with the opening of Crumble Cookies, Tomahawk Axe Throwing, the Mint Facial Bar, Freedom Fitness Gym, The Gym, Barstow Country Butchering, Mr. Kabob's, Towns End Stillhouse and Grill, The Village and AV Bicycles' relocation expansion. Nearly 45,000 square feet of medical office space was also constructed near Providence St. Mary's Medical Center.

The town is currently processing nearly 30 million feet of industrial space.

### Barstow:

Raising Cane's opened in Barstow in 2022. In 2023 Dutch Bros., KFC and Taco Bell opened brand new pads off Main Street. Chicken Guys will be debuting within the next year.

Construction on BNSF's Inland Port should begin in the first quarter of 2025, and the facility should be operational in 2027. Burlington Northern has already acquired nearly 4,300 of the 4,500 acres and has spent well over \$40 million on land.

The Bradco Companies has 14 months nearing completion on its easements with Caltrans for The Shops at Spanish Trail, under Barstow Spanish Trail, LLC, located off I-15, adjacent to Home Depot. The project has a partial entitlement of about 801,000 square feet of mixed-use space.

### Hesperia:

Not only is Hesperia greeting industrial logistics distribution in a very aggressive way — with nearly 3 million square feet to be completed by Covington Capital — but there is now more than 13 million square feet of planned industrial, logistical and manufacturing coming to the south/western portion of the city.

Ranchero Road is undergoing a major \$52 million widening under direction of Sully Miller to help welcome Silverwood, a master-planned community developed by DMB in conjunction with Terra Verde Partners. This project has been envisioned for more than 40 years. 15,633 dwelling units will be built over the next 25 years. Grading started February 2022, with more than 15 million cubic yards being moved. The developer is prepping for about 1,987 initial lots that will be partially completed, graded and prepared for the six national homebuilders that will debut their model complexes by July 2024.

This will not only be a "smart community," but an upscale community that will draw homeowners from Southern California and throughout the Mojave River Valley. Every home will be wired with one gig of Internet.

Newly announced: Maersk has taken more than 1 million square feet of industrial space in Hesperia as one of the biggest industrial deals in Southern California's Inland Empire. This is a positive sign for the Mojave River Valley and shows the growth that we are experiencing in the industrial market in our region.

### Victorville:

Construction for the new CarMax Auto Dealership is completed. The overall site is 4.2 acres that will include a 7,600-square-foot showroom, sales and service building.

There are five hotels planned in Victorville, including Holiday Inn Express, Comfort Suites, Fairfield Suites & Avid Hotels (under construction), Hampton Inn and Wyndham Garden Inn.

Victorville has completed their Green Tree Extension project, which has been envisioned for more than 60 years. The project links Green Tree Boulevard to Yucca Loma Road in Apple Valley. This will fully extend Green Tree Boulevard the 1.5 miles from Hesperia Road to Ridgecrest and Yates roads, as well as continue another two miles east to Apple Valley.

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With over 37 years of local experience The Bradco Companies delivers quality results by opening doors, forming long-term relationships, and efficiently advising our clients on the Mojave River Valley (*High Desert*) market.

## NOBODY KNOWS THE MOJAVE RIVER VALLEY (HIGH DESERT) LIKE BRADCO

The Mojave River Valley (*High Desert*) is the fastest growing region in the Inland Empire and will double its population in the next 20 years.

The benefits of developing in the High Desert/Mojave River Valley is that you have five (5) very pro-growth cities that want good, well planned, and well thought out development.

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