

Home of
spaceport america

TRAVEL

SIERRA COUNTY
NEW MEXICO

GUIDE



WELCOME!

TO SIERRA COUNTY



AVERAGE TEMPS

THE TERRAIN IN SIERRA COUNTY VARIES WIDELY, FROM HIGH DESERT TO HEAVILY FORESTED MOUNTAINS, AND SO IT FOLLOWS THAT AVERAGE TEMPERATURES VARY.

AVERAGE TEMPS	AVERAGE ELEVATION	AVERAGE WINTER HIGH / LOW	AVERAGE SUMMER HIGH / LOW
Hillsboro / Kingston	5500 / 6200	60 / 25	90 / 55
Chloride / Winston	6150	55 / 20	85 / 50
T or C / Elephant Butte	4400	65 / 30	95 / 55

ICON KEY



COVER PHOTO: RIVERBEND HOT SPRINGS
BY JUDD IRISH BRADLEY.

MAP COURTESY OF THE
GERONIMO TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY.

state parks



ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE STATE PARK

is home to the largest and most popular lake in New Mexico. Created by a dam built in 1916 to provide flood control and irrigation down river, New Mexico's premier water recreation destination offers more than 100 miles of shoreline with sandy beaches, quiet coves, full-service marinas, and plenty of open water for fishing boats, houseboats and cabin cruisers.

Nearly every water activity imaginable is available at Elephant Butte Lake, including sailing, power boating, water skiing, fishing (several guides offer fishing tours), scuba diving, and canoeing. The park has 9 campgrounds, and the visitors' center near the main entrance offers regional interpretive exhibits.



CABALLO AND PERCHA DAM STATE PARKS are quieter than their sister state park 15 miles north, providing similar recreation activities at a bit slower pace.

Fishing, boating and all sorts of water sports can be enjoyed at scenic Caballo Lake State Park. Its campgrounds are popular with birders, and the cactus gardens are a favorite destination for students on field trips.

Consistently listed among the state's Top Five Birding Spots, Percha Dam State Park is small, serene and shaded by tall cottonwood trees. Water access is limited to fishing and swimming.



PHOTO: ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE
BY: JUDD IRISH BRADLEY



Fish, Float, beach!

BRING PLENTY OF TOWELS AND SUN-SCREEN TO THE SHORES OF ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE - IT HAS (CONSIDERABLY!) MORE SANDY BEACH THAN ANY OTHER BODY OF WATER IN THE STATE AND IS PERFECT FOR RELAXING "BEACH-STYLE."

THE COUNTY'S THREE MAJOR BODIES OF WATER ARE FAVORITES AMONG ANGLERS, WHO FISH FOR WALLEYE, CATFISH, FOUR TYPES OF BASS, AND MORE.

FOLKS FROM MILES AROUND ESCAPE THE HEAT IN SUMMER BY FLOATING DOWN THE RIVER IN TUBS, CANOES AND KAYAKS.

elephant butte

truth OR consequences

williamsburg



The City of **ELEPHANT BUTTE**, one of New Mexico's newest communities, embodies the hopefulness of the modern frontier spirit. Located just west of the lake and hailed as New Mexico's "Diamond in the Desert," Elephant Butte is known for year-round recreation. During summer months, when lake visitation is at its peak, the city's population swells significantly.



Located adjacent to I-25 midway between Albuquerque and El Paso, **TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES** is a county seat with a small-town vibe. A walk through downtown T or C, as the locals call it, can be like stepping into a living time capsule; one can stroll among businesses on WPA-era sidewalks, take a soak in T or C's ancient hot springs, or dine at a steak house straight out of the 1980s.

The city hosts Second Saturday Art Hop each month, when visitors and locals alike gather for an evening of exploring the town's shops, galleries, and restaurants.

In 1950, TV game show host Ralph Edwards made a unique offer to the towns in America: "change your name to Truth or Consequences and I'll bring my show there for a live broadcast." Hot Springs, New Mexico rose to the challenge, and Ralph brought his crew to town for the first time on April Fools' Day.

He came to love the place and its people so much that he returned every year (with tv and movie stars in tow!) for Fiesta, an annual celebration of the name change. Fiesta continues to this day; a parade, rodeo, contests and music are all part of the county's biggest annual event.



WILLIAMSBURG welcomes weary travelers off I-25. The little town came to be in 1950, when some folks in Truth or Consequences moved next door in protest of the new name! Today, it's progressed with RV parks, service stations, a long-established resale business, a motel and a small public park near the highway.



hot springs!

DOWNTOWN TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

sits atop a natural aquifer that produces somewhat salty, odorless water ranging from 100-115 degrees Fahrenheit.



Were the city and nearby Elephant Butte Dam not here, the downtown would be a warm, muddy swamp, subject to seasonal flooding from the Rio Grande.



The event that changed the area forever was the construction of Elephant Butte Dam (1911-1916). Liquor and gambling were outlawed at the construction site, but establishments in the hot springs settlement five miles away offered both, in abundance. The population

grew rapidly and the town of Hot Springs was incorporated in 1914.

Completion of the dam altered the river's flow such that stick frame bath houses could be erected on land recently claimed from the flood plain. The town developed as a health resort through the '30s and '40s, using "City of Health" and "Health Capital of America" as slogans.

In 1950, Hot Springs changed its name to Truth or Consequences. Some say the name change caused the mineral baths to be forgotten, but today the springs are experiencing a resurgence in popularity. Many of T or C's ten charmingly restored commercial spas are open to walk-ins who can pay to soak by the hour. Several also offer lodging and spa treatments.



PHOTO: BLACKSTONE HOTSPRINGS
BY MOSHE KOENICK

SPACEPORT AMERICA



SPACEPORT AMERICA, THE WORLD'S FIRST PURPOSE-BUILT COMMERCIAL SPACEPORT, TAKES ADVANTAGE OF SIERRA COUNTY'S HIGH DESERT SETTING, close proximity to White Sands Missile Range and almost unending blue skies. Owned by the State of New Mexico, this spaceflight launch venue has hosted a variety of suborbital spaceflights since 2006. The spaceport is designed to blend into the natural landscape while offering unique geographic advantages to its commercial space tenants. A Spaceport Visitor Center is located in downtown Truth or Consequences, next to the Geronimo Trail Visitor Center.

While it is just 35 miles SE of Truth or Consequences / Elephant Butte, Spaceport America is in a remote location; there are no service stations or other amenities along the way, and cellphone service is limited at best. All unauthorized visitors will be turned away at the security gate; please prearrange your visit!



yes sir!

THE ANCHOR TENANT AT SPACEPORT AMERICA IS VIRGIN GALACTIC, THE BRAINCHILD OF ENTREPRENEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE SIR RICHARD BRANSON.



MUSEUMS



THE PIONEER STORE was built in 1880 during Chloride's short-lived silver boom. By 1923 most of the town's residents had moved on, and the owners of the mercantile closed the store, sealing all of its contents inside the building.

More than sixty years later, a recently-retired couple bought the dilapidated building, realizing it was a treasure trove of historical artifacts (including most of the town records from 1880 to 1923). After a four year restoration, furnishings and inventory were reinstalled, and the Pioneer Store Museum opened in 1998. It was subsequently added to the State Register of Cultural Properties. (Thur-Mon 10am-4pm. 575-743-2736)

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK & HAMILTON MILITARY MUSEUM are located next to the State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences. The Hamilton Museum places special emphasis on local heroes, but exhibits everything from military buttons to Buffalo Soldier memorabilia. (Tue-Sat 10am-4pm & Sun 12-4pm. 575-894-0750)

Outside is the Walk of Education, commemorating the 16 conflicts in which the U.S. has been involved since 1775. Also on site is a half-scale replica of the revered Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. (24/7/365. 575-894-0750)

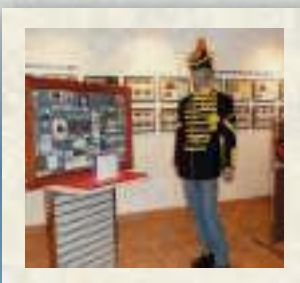
THE GERONIMO SPRINGS MUSEUM constructs a comprehensive history of the county and its inhabitants. Collections include everything from fossils to a world-class pottery exhibit to historic Hispanic and Apache artifacts.

Permanent exhibits include the Southwestern pottery collection, mostly in the famous Mimbres and Tularosa style, dating from A.D. 200 to A.D. 1350. A life-size wax statue of Geronimo dominates the Apache room; artifacts, photographs and information about Apache life fill the space. An authentic Miner's Cabin contains relics of the early mining industry. In the Ralph Edwards Room, the game show host, his television show, and the Fiesta he fostered are featured in regal fashion. Visitors can even watch an episode of the famous program that started it all. (Mon-Sat 10am-4pm & Sun 12-4pm. 575-894-6600)

THE BLACK RANGE MUSEUM tells the story of Hillsboro and its famous (and infamous) residents. (Fri-Sun 10am-3pm. 575-895-3321)

memorial wall

"THE WALL" IS A HALF-SIZE GRANITE REPLICA OF THE D.C. MONUMENT, AND IS A MUST-SEE FOR SERVICE MEMBERS OF ANY AGE.



historic Villages

& ghost towns

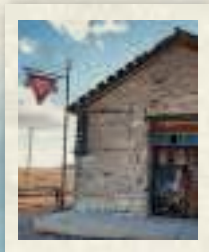


CHLORIDE'S dozen or so residents live in what's essentially a former ghost town. It sprang up in 1880, two years after Briton Harry Pye chanced upon silver ore, a discovery he initially kept secret. Word eventually got out, prompting a boom.

Undergoing robust restoration town-wide, many of Chloride's original structures still stand. Highlights are the Pioneer Store Museum and the "Doodle Dum" (on the NM List of Cultural Properties), which was constructed to protect its builder from what he believed would be an apocalyptic hailstorm. Today, two restored cabins are available for overnight rental, and RVers can stay in a small park.



WINSTON was settled in 1881 by miners wanting to escape rowdy Chloride. It flourished until the silver panic; today only a few families remain. Historic buildings still stand alongside the General Store, which has the only fuel for miles around, groceries, and shower facilities. There are several outfitters/hunting guides in the area, and a B&B specializing in trail riding is nearby.



▲ a true ghost town ▲

DUE SOUTH OF HILLSBORO IS LAKE VALLEY, LOCATION OF THE BRIDAL CHAMBER MINE, WHICH CONTAINED ONE OF THE RICHEST VEINS OF SILVER EVER DISCOVERED. WALKING TOURS OF LAKE VALLEY ARE AVAILABLE FROM 9-4 EVERY DAY EXCEPT TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY.

historic Villages

& ghost towns

CUCHILLO, recently named a "Traditional Historic Community," was settled during the Civil War. Midway between Chloride and Winston's mines and the railroad at Engle, it was a thriving trade center from the 1880s mining boom to the 1930s. Charming original buildings survive including San Jose Catholic Church, built in 1907. Legend has it that the Cuchillo Bar and Store is haunted!

Stylistically and architecturally Spanish, **MONTICELLO** was founded by ranchers and farmers in 1856. The town and surrounding valley have attracted organic farmers, and an old-world-style vineyard is located here. A classic whitewashed church, still used today for worship and community gatherings, faces the central plaza.



geronimo!

THE GERONIMO TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY CONNECTS THE COUNTY'S HISTORIC VILLAGES, AND IS AN ACCESS POINT FOR THE JORNADA DEL MUERTO (JOURNEY OF THE DEAD MAN) - THE MOST DIFFICULT LEG OF EL CAMINO REAL, THE HISTORIC ROUTE OF TRAVEL BETWEEN MEXICO CITY AND SANTA FE.



farm fresh

EASILY MISSED BY ANYONE BARRELING DOWN THE INTERSTATE ARE SEVERAL SMALL FARMING COMMUNITIES. GOODS PRODUCED INCLUDE ALPACA-TO-CLOSET HAND-KNITS, ORGANIC BALSAMIC VINEGAR, AND RARE HEIRLOOM VEGGIES. FIND THEM AT THE SIERRA COUNTY FARMERS MARKET.

historic Villages

& ghost towns



1890s **KINGSTON** was once the epitome of the Wild West and the biggest burg in the territory. The town, located in the Black Range Mountains on the east edge of the Gila Wilderness, had all of the trappings of civilization and culture: major stagecoach lines, numerous hotels, and a whopping twenty-three saloons. Remnants of those glory days can be found at the Black Range Lodge, a B&B constructed from the ruins of what once was Pretty Sam's Casino.



Gold spurred the founding of **HILLSBORO** in 1877; by 1907 the town had a population of 1,200 despite being the target of fierce Indian attacks. Modern Hillsboro is decidedly laid-back. The town has a museum, a cafe, a vineyard and winery, an antique store, lodging, and a self-guided walking tour of important ruins and buildings. Hillsboro's Community Center (on the National Register of Historic Places) hosts concerts and annual events.



**check out the view
at emory pass!**

PARK AT THE SCENIC OVERLOOK EIGHT MILES WEST OF KINGSTON FOR A VIEW FROM THE APEX OF THE BLACK RANGE. HIKERS MAY WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A TRAIL NEAR THE PARKING AREA.



working girl

SADIE ORCHARD, AN EARLY HILLSBOROAN, WAS A STRONG WOMAN WITH A SIMPLE NAME. STAGECOACH DRIVER, PHILANTHROPIST, AND MOST FAMOUSLY, MADAME, SHE HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF BOOKS, TV DRAMAS, AND (ESPECIALLY) HER OWN TALL TALES.

YEAR-ROUND RECREATION



HIKING & ECOTOURS - Visitors wanting to connect with nature have more options than ever. Elephant Butte Lake State Park's four trails are a great introduction to wild New Mexico, from primitive paths to paved roads. Outside the state parks, guide services offer outings and photography expeditions.

With the Sierra Grande as the starting point, Ted Turner Reserves take guests on once-in-a-lifetime trips to terrain as varied as lush riparian habitat and rugged, rocky peaks. In addition to seeing rare species like bison, oryx, or bats, one can tour primitive, pioneer homesites, marvel at Mimbres-era rock art, or hike a world-class slot canyon.

The Black Range, on the Eastern edge of the Gila wilderness, is best viewed from Emory Pass on Route 152 west of Kingston. This spot is a trailhead for some great treks—from five to nearly twenty-eight miles—affording spectacular views to seasoned hikers.

The Healing Waters Trail in Truth or Consequences is a chance to get close to history. Follow trail markers embedded in downtown's sidewalks to visit an ancient gathering site of native peoples and tour hot springs that have soothed visitors for decades. The Veterans Hill segment, complete with informational markers, shaded benches, and great views of the Rio Grande, ends at Veterans Memorial Park, a place for quiet contemplation (at least until Veterans' Day, when folks come from miles around to take part in activities and ceremonies that honor those who served.)

ROCKHOUNDING - Rock hunters love New Mexico, and Sierra County is a great example of the reason why. Ancient sea beds erode and reveal fossilized marine life; in some spots, one literally trips over the stony remains. Green fluorite is common here, as are many varieties of quartz. Banded agate, a mineral named for its unusual, undulating stripes, is somewhat unique to this area. According to our source at the Sierra County Rock and Gem Society (SCRAGS), "most people come to Sierra County to collect carnelian, amethyst, and sulfides." scrags.org

play a round

GOLF DIGEST NAMED ELEPHANT BUTTE'S SIERRA DEL RIO GOLF COURSE ONE OF NM'S TEN BEST! THE 18-HOLE COURSE SPORTS A DRIVING RANGE, PRO SHOP, AND A FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT/BAR OVERLOOKING THE COURSE. TORC'S NINE-HOLE MUNICIPAL COURSE HOSTS ANNUAL TOURNAMENTS AND DOUBLES AS A DISC GOLF COURSE.



CATTLE
GUARD

YEAR-ROUND RECREATION

BIRD WATCHING - Sierra County boasts a wealth of Audubon-approved bird watching habitat, thanks to the variety of environments and waterways in the area. In particular, Percha Dam State Park is famous for being prime bird real estate. Among the dozens of species that either make our high desert their permanent home or simply travel through it each year are the gorgeous Sand Hill Cranes, Snowy Egrets and Great Blue Herons, as well as different types of raptors and eagles.



STARGAZING - Thanks to New Mexico's efforts to minimize light pollution, the whole state offers great views of the stars, and Sierra County's sparse population ups the night-sky ante! Wide open spaces are everywhere you look, and allow superb viewings of our galaxy and space-related events such as the International Space Station passing by.

Where else can one easily enjoy seemingly unending views of the heavens while immersed in water? Nothing quite compares to the experience of witnessing a meteor shower while floating in the middle of a lake or an outdoor hot spring.

let's ride!

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES ARE A GREAT WAY TO SEE SIERRA COUNTY! THESE OPEN-AIR VEHICLES ARE LEGAL ON BLM LAND AS WELL AS ANY COUNTY ROAD OR POWER LINE ROAD. STEER CLEAR OF PRIVATE PROPERTY, STATE PARKS, WILDERNESS AREAS, STATE HIGHWAYS AND INTERSTATES. OHV LICENSES ARE REQUIRED AND RULES APPLY. SIERRACOUNTY.INFO/OHV.

Restaurants

ARREY

ARREY CAFE

NM Hwy. 187 • 575.267.4436

CUISINE

WINE BEER
FULL BAR

MEETING
CAPACITY

Mexican

ELEPHANT BUTTE

bigfoot restaurant

212 Warm Springs Blvd.
575.744.4896 • bigfoot.restaurant

burgers n' buns

On the water near Kettle Top
575-740-2526 • seasonal

casa taco

704 Hwy. 195
575.744.4859 • casa-taco.com

turtleback bapthouse & grill

101 Club House Dr.
575.744.4653 • sierradelriogolf.com

CUISINE

WINE BEER
FULL BAR

MEETING
CAPACITY

Eclectic

NM Spirits,
Wine, Beer

American

American,
Mexican

Wine,
Beer

50

Steaks,
American

Full Bar

125

HILLSBORO

general store cafe

100 Main St. Hwy. 152 • 575.895.5306

CUISINE

WINE BEER
FULL BAR

MEETING
CAPACITY

American,
Mexican

WILLIAMSBURG

mexican grill

719 S. Broadway • 575.894.0000

CUISINE

WINE BEER
FULL BAR

MEETING
CAPACITY

Mexican

* Fast Food Restaurants:

TorC > McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Sonic, Subway, Del Taco (all on N. Date St., near I-25 exit 79)

Elephant Butte > Krispy Krunchy Chicken (Hwy195 @ Rock Canyon Rd.)



TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

CUISINE

WINE BEER
FULL BAR

MEETING
CAPACITY

a&d drive-in

211 N. Broadway St. • 575.894.9294

American,
Mexican

carmen's kitchen

1806 S. Broadway St. • 575.894.0006

Mexican

coffee express

1910 N. Date St. • 575.894.1047

Coffee To Go

el fero

315 N. Broadway St. • 575.894.2886

American,
Mexican

full moon kitchen

109 Austin St. • fullmoonkitchentorc.com

American,
Mexican

grapevine bistro

426 N. Broadway St. • 575.894.0404

American,
Mexican

johnny b's

2260 N. Date St. • 575.894.0147

American,
Mexican

la baracca

304 S. Pershing • 575.300.7018

Italian

la cocina / hot stuff

1 Lakeview Dr. • 575.894.6499

American,
Mexican

Wine,
Beer

60

los arcos steak & lobster

1400 N. Date St. • 575.894.6200

Steak, Seafood

Full Bar

16

mile marker 7

603 Main Ave.

Coffee To Go

outer edge pizzeria

719 Main Ave. • 575.894.5555

Italian, Deli

Wine,
Beer

pacific grill

800 N. Date St. • 575.894.7687

Asian, Seafood,
American

Wine,
Beer

passion pie cafe

406 Main Ave. • 575.894.6848 • passionpiecafe.com

Coffee, Bakery

sidekick

820 N Cedar St. • 575.894.7467 • sidekicknm.com

American,
Mexican

NM Spirits,
Wine, Beer

sunset grill

1301 N. Date St. • 575.894.8904

American,
Mexican

the giddy up cafe

313 N. Broadway St. • thegiddyupcafe.com

American

the restaurant at sierra grande

501 McAdoo • 575.894.6976

Contemporary
American

Wine,
Beer

tony's

1990 S. Broadway St. • 575.894.9047

Mexican

Lodging

price key: \$: 55-99 \$\$: 100-135 \$\$\$: 136+

CHLORIDE	PRICE	B&B	PETS ALLOWED	SMOKING	HOT SPRINGS	MASSAGE	FULL SPA	POOL	MEETING CAP
miners and pye cabins Wall St. • 575.743.2736 pioneerstoremuseum.com	\$\$\$		X						

ELEPHANT BUTTE	PRICE	B&B	PETS ALLOWED	SMOKING	HOT SPRINGS	MASSAGE	FULL SPA	POOL	MEETING CAP
elephant butte inn 401 Hwy. 195 575.744.5431 • elephantbutteinn.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X		X	X	X	200	
marina suites motel 200 Country Club Rd. 575.744.5269 • marinasuitesmotel.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X	X					

KINGSTON	PRICE	B&B	PETS ALLOWED	SMOKING	HOT SPRINGS	MASSAGE	FULL SPA	POOL	MEETING CAP
black range lodge 119 Main St. 575.895.5652 • blackrangelodge.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X		X			40	

HILLSBORO	PRICE	B&B	PETS ALLOWED	SMOKING	HOT SPRINGS	MASSAGE	FULL SPA	POOL	MEETING CAP
enchanted villa b&b 10682 Hwy. 152 575.895.5686 • enchanted-villann.com	\$\$-\$\$	X						25	
percha motel 10708 Hwy. 152 575.635.1690 • perchamotel.com	\$\$		X						

WILLIAMSBURG	PRICE	B&B	PETS ALLOWED	SMOKING	HOT SPRINGS	MASSAGE	FULL SPA	POOL	MEETING CAP
rio grande motel 720 Broadway St. • 575.894.9769	\$\$-\$\$		X	X					

Information is updated at:
SIERRACOUNTY.INFO/LODGING

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES	PRICE	B&B	PETS ALLOWED	SMOKING	HOT SPRINGS	MASSAGE	FULL SPA	POOL	MEETING CAP
ace lodge 1302 N. Date St • 575.894.2151	\$		X	X					
blackstone hotspings 410 Austin St. 575.894.0894 • blackstonehotspings.com	\$\$-\$\$\$				X				
charles motel & spa 601 N. Broadway St. 575.894.7154 • charleshotspingsresort.com	\$\$-\$\$		X		X	X	X		
comfort inn 2251 N. Date St. 575.894.1660 • comfortinn.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X	X				X	
desert view inn 906 N. Date St. 575.894.7282 • desertviewinn.com	\$								
fire water lodge 311 N. Broadway St. 575.740.0315 • firewaterlodge.com	\$\$		X		X	X			25
holiday inn express 2201 F.T. Amin St. 800.315.2621 • hiexpress.com	\$\$-\$\$\$								X 100
hot springs glamp camp 675 S. Foch St. 575.740.6775 • hotspringsglampcamp.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X		X				
indian springs apartments 218 Austin St. • 575.894.2018	\$			X	X				
la paloma hot springs 311 Marr St. 575.894.3148 • lapalomasprings.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X		X	X			40
motel 6 2151 N. Date St. 575.894.7888 • motel6.com	\$\$		X						
pelican spa 306 S. Pershing St. 575.894.0037 • pelican-spa.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X		X	X			15
riverbend hot springs 100 Austin St. 575.894.7625 • riverbendhotspings.com	\$\$-\$\$\$		X		X				30
rocket inn 605 N. Date St. 575.894.2964 • rocketinn.net	\$		X						
sierra grande 501 McAdoo St. 575.894.6976 • sierragrandelodge.com	\$\$\$	X	X		X	X	X		60
travelodge 2270 N. Date St. 575.894.6665	\$\$-\$\$\$		X	X				X	

View a comprehensive list of our RV Parks at
SIERRACOUNTY.INFO/RVPARKS



“Genesis” marks the turnoff to space.



Sierra
County

NM 
TRUE

sierracounty.info