

# NEIGHBORHOOD



## Simi Valley awash in culture

By Maggie Hood

In 2005, Simi Valley was listed by the FBI as one of the top ten safest large cities in the U.S. to live in. Just a short drive from all the hottest attractions Southern California has to offer, Simi Valley is surrounded by the Santa Susana Mountain range and the Simi Hills, west of the San Fernando Valley, east of the Conejo Valley, and just 40 miles north of downtown LA. Since it is tucked away in an inland valley, the weather is very hot during the summer months, with temperatures regularly pushing into the 90s.

Six Flags Magic Mountain, Universal Studios, The Ronald Reagan Memorial Library, The Getty Center, The Los Angeles Zoo, Griffith Park, the Planetarium and more are all just a short freeway drive away. But within Simi Valley, you will find more than enough activities to keep the entire family amused and entertained every day of the week.

The Chumash Indians were the original inhabitants of this beautiful valley, with their presence dating back 10,000 to 12,000 years. The name of the town is said to originate from their word “shimiji,” referring to the thread-like clouds sometimes seen over the valley. Following the Chumash period was the Spanish colonial period, during which land grants established ownership of large parcels of land. El Rancho Simi was the largest land grant ever made in California,

approximately 113,000 acres.

Beginning in the 1860s, Easterners began to locate in the area, lured west by the promise of cheap land and fabulous weather. Eventually there were four small settlements in the valley, and at one time it was even known as “Simiopolis.” The decision of the Southern Pacific Railroad to tunnel through the Santa Susanna Mountains really changed everything, and when the tunnel was completed in 1904, Santa Susanna became a center for agriculture and railroad activity.

Today, Simi Valley is a thriving city with a population of about 120,543\*. The city is very family-oriented and focuses on services for all ages.

Due to the surrounding mountains, trails abound for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. More than 25 city and county parks offer activities year-round. The Rancho Tapo Community Park features a Veteran’s Memorial sculpture, a child’s water play area, and an amphitheater. The historic Simi Valley Cultural Center, which originally housed a Methodist church, re-opened in 1995 and features award-winning theatrical and musical productions for the whole family to enjoy. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum is one of Southern California’s most beautiful and unique destinations. Perched atop a hill with sweeping views of Simi Valley, it is now the home of Air Force One.

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### REAL ESTATE SALES: SIMI VALLEY

#### SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES:

**SOLD** in 2008: 981

2008 High: \$2,062,000

2009 High: \$1,287,000

2008 Low: \$180,000

2009 Low: \$175,000

**SOLD** in 2009 (YTD): 755

Median:

Median: \$385,000

Average DOM:

Average DOM:

#### CONDOMINIUMS:

**SOLD** in 2008: 195

2008 High: \$635,000

2009 High: \$555,000

2008 Low: \$139,000

2009 Low: \$110,000

**SOLD** in 2009 (YTD): 164

Median: \$299,900

Median: \$404,925

Average DOM: 84

Average DOM: 95

### STATS

#### SIMI VALLEY (statistics as of 2000 Census)

**Population:** 120,543 (estimated as of July 2008)

#### Population distribution:

**Under 18:** 26.6%

**25-44:** 32.9%

**45-64:** 28.9%

**65+:** 9.2%

**Median age:** 36.4

**Median household income:** 88,406

