

NEIGHBORHOOD



Ventura has it all

By Maggie Hood

The City of Ventura's official name is the City of San Buenaventura. Founded in 1792 by Franciscan Friar Father Junipero Serra, the mission formed the basis for what would become the city. Ventura is one of the oldest central coast communities that began with a mission. The beautiful, original building is located in the heart of the downtown area, adjacent to vibrant nightlife, eclectic boutiques, art galleries, thrift stores, bookshops, outstanding restaurants, a 10-screen movie theater, nightclubs with live music and more.

Ventura's history is rich, and has long been linked with agriculture and oil. Thomas R. Bard, formerly a railroad worker, is often regarded as the Father of Ventura, and his descendants have been prominently identified with the growth of Ventura County. The main Ventura oil field was drilled in 1914, producing at its peak 90,000 barrels per day. The city's rich soil between the Ventura River to the north and the Santa Clara River to the south, produces soil so rich that citrus grows better here than anywhere else in the state. In the early part of the 1900s, local citrus farmers formed Sunkist Growers Inc., the world's largest organization of citrus production.

Up until the 1930s, Ventura's growth was slow due to its location and the steep Conejo Grade separating it from the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Eventually, the completion of the four-lane U.S. Highway

101 over the Conejo Grade in 1959 improved travel immensely by linking Ventura with the L.A. area.

Nestled between the foothills and the Pacific Ocean, Ventura is located 63 miles north of Los Angeles, and 30 miles south of Santa Barbara. The city draws people from all over the United States and our neighbor to the south, Mexico, due in part to its idyllic year-round Mediterranean climate.

With an estimated population of more than 107,000, it's a big city with a small-town atmosphere, close enough to the big city of L.A. so that you can enjoy all that both have to offer. Ventura is a haven for everything from family-owned businesses to high-tech entrepreneurial enterprises; successful businesses abound.

Thanks to efforts by city officials, Ventura has become a destination tourist resort as well as a popular recreational paradise. Surfers come from all over to enjoy some of the best surfing in Southern California, notably Surfer's Point across from the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Down along the beachfront is a promenade where people bike, walk or jog all daylong. On days too windy for surfing, you'll see the kite surfers jumping the waves. The famous Channel Islands are just a 45-minute catamaran ride to the west, where you can snorkel, hike, camp and enjoy solitude and nature. It's not uncommon to be surrounded by pods of dolphins or whales.

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STATS

AREA:

Total: 32.7 sq mi

Land: 21.1 sq mi

Water: 11.6 sq mi

DEMOGRAPHICS: (Based on 2000 Census data)

Population: 100,916 (currently over 107,000)

Households: 38,524

Families: 25,233

Population distribution:

Under 18: 25%

18-24: 7.8%

25-44: 31.5%

45-64: 22.8%

65+: 12.8%

Median age: 37

Median income for a household: \$52,298

Median income for a family: \$60,466

Median income for males: \$43,828

Median income for females: \$31,793

Below poverty line: 9% of the population

Per capita income: \$25,065

Website: cityofventura.net



VENTURA COUNTY

Sales volume of homes/condos:

June 2008: 767

June 2009: 844

10% increase

Median Price:

June 2008: 420,000

June 2009: \$365,00

13% decrease

Courtesy of Data Quick Information Systems