

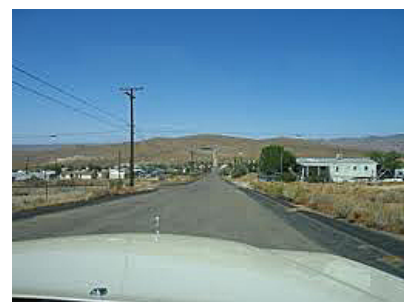
Dear Loyal Readers, - Sunday - February 2, 2014

Today is a travel day. BRRRR It was another cold night. I sure didn't want to crawl from under the covers! The furnace soon had The Peanut toasty warm. I noticed my water hose froze last night. It had a slight drip at the trailer. This morning there was an ice stalactite about 8 inches high on the ground. I was on the road by 9:00 heading south on state route 395.

I have been over this territory before, so I was looking for two specific sites to explore. Eight miles south of Ridgecrest are two towns of interest. Randsburg and Johannesburg are two old mining towns.



Johannesburg is the first town you come to. It was founded to support mining operation at Randsburg. During the first half of the 20th Century, the Rand Mining District was the principal gold producing region of California. Johannesburg was named by miners who had previously worked in the gold-producing region of South Africa. The first post office at Johannesburg opened in 1897. There isn't much left of Johannesburg. Highway 395 runs right down the middle of the town, what little of it there is!



Johannesburg is located 1 mile east-northeast of Randsburg and is divided from its neighbors by a ridge. Gold was discovered at Rand Mine near the site in 1895 and a mining camp quickly formed, and was named Rand Camp, both mine and camp were named after the gold mining region in South Africa. The first post office at Randsburg opened in 1896.



In 1919, silver was discovered east of town on Red Mountain. The Rand Mine produced more silver than any mine in California.

The center for most tourists in Randsburg is the general store / ice cream parlor famous for their 1904 soda fountain and "Black Bart" banana split dessert. The general store is still active and filled with great food, many other necessities of life, and antiques from the area. There are a number of antique stores, art galleries, gift shops, and a historic mining museum of the area. The town's old jail is open to tourists, also.







On down the road, a piece, most travelers going from Bakersfield to Barstow, or San Bernardino to Mammoth Mountain, will eventually arrive at Kramer Corner. Kramer Junction, also known as Four Corners is another small high-desert community in the Mojave Desert at the intersection of U.S. Route 395 and State Route 58. What's there? Not much! There are gas stations, one on each corner. The ARCO station is 1/4 mile further down the road. Hungry? There's the Burger King.



The most interesting things are the small antiques market on the main corner, and the gigantic Solar Power station with endless rows of curved mirrors just outside of town. You can't miss that power plant!

I've driven by this site many times without stopping. This time, as I was heading south on 395, I wanted to stop to take pictures of the Power Station. I'm sorry to say,

there weren't too many good spots to stop and take pictures. I did take a few - and augmented the rest from the internet. Here is your education for today.

What is all of this for? Well, the installation uses parabolic trough, solar thermal technology along with natural gas to generate electricity. About 90% of the electricity is produced by the sunlight. Natural gas is only used when the solar power is insufficient to meet the demand from Southern California Edison, the distributor of power in southern California.

The parabolic mirrors are shaped like a half-pipe. The sun shines onto the panels made of glass, which are 94% reflective, unlike a typical mirror, which is only 70% reflective. The mirrors automatically track the sun throughout the day. The greatest source of mirror breakage is wind, with 3,000 mirrors typically replaced each year. Operators can turn the mirrors to protect them during intense wind storms. An automated washing mechanism is used to periodically clean the parabolic reflective panels.

The sunlight bounces off the mirrors and is directed to a central tube filled with synthetic oil, which heats to





over 400 °C (750 °F). The reflected light focused at the central tube is 71 to 80 times more intense than the ordinary sunlight. The synthetic oil transfers its heat to water, which boils and drives the steam turbine, thereby generating electricity. Synthetic oil is used to carry the heat (instead of water) to keep the pressure within manageable parameters.



The rest of the travel day went without further stops. I spent the night at the high desert community of Twentynine Palms. The 29 Palms Resort and RV Park is very nice and I can recommend a stay for travelers going to and from Joshua Tree National Park, or actually any place else! They have an indoor heated swimming pool. I took good advantage of that feature.

I might add that I spent 4 nights here about 5 years ago as I explored Joshua Tree NP. Now, that's an interesting place. I will save that spot for future reports.

So, dear Loyal Readers, that has been my travel day. Tomorrow will be another travel day as I head for Quartzsite and the big "cult" gathering. I understand there are already early arrivals ahead of me. Now it's off to bed for me - until tomorrow - bye for now - - Earl

Earl's Diary - Monday - February 3, 2014

Dear Loyal Readers,

Today was another travel day - about 150 miles. I left Twentynine Palms at 10:00 heading due east on state route 62 - toward Parker, Arizona. I stopped in Parker for a grocery stop, and on the road again. By that time I was anxious to get to my destination - Quartzsite. Q is only 38 miles from Parker, so I arrived early in the afternoon - about 2:00. Oh yes, I forgot. I lost an hour after crossing the Colorado River. Oh well, The Peanut is now home for the next week. There will be lots more to report tomorrow. So until then - bye for now - - Earl

