

# Approve environmentally friendly quarry

**O.B. Johnson, Riverside Press-Enterprise, 4-14-11**

Johnson is chairman of Friends of Liberty Quarry.

I am a proud Southwest Riverside County resident and have called Temecula Valley home for the last 13 years. Through my long career as a local realtor, I have seen our region through times of growth and recession.

When I first heard of the Liberty Quarry project in 2005, I knew it made sense for Riverside County both environmentally and economically.

Liberty Quarry is good for all of Riverside County, including Temecula. My support for this project has grown through thoughtful study and evaluation through the past six years.

The county's environmental impact report has thoroughly evaluated every potential impact and concludes that Riverside County will be better off with Liberty Quarry than without it.

It will take more than 1,200 trucks off the road daily, eliminating 216 tons of air pollutants annually. The report estimates that the project could eliminate 16.5 million truck miles through our county, resulting in a 35,000-ton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This is a project we should get behind.

Trucking construction materials back and forth from distant quarries clogs up local freeways and spews more diesel pollution into the air.

## **GOOD FOR REGION**

I heard Will Kempton, the former state director of Caltrans give a talk in Temecula about four years ago where he told the crowd that local aggregate facilities are good for the economy and good for the environment and that we needed Liberty Quarry.

As we recover from the recession, it will be time to get to work on much-needed roadways and infrastructure-improvement projects. Getting this infrastructure in place is what will help attract new businesses that can provide local jobs and revenue to our region.

As the county faces 14 percent unemployment and hard-hitting budget cuts, a new mineral resource will also provide a significant economic boost. Liberty Quarry will create 99 new local jobs, putting local people back to work, and the project is expected to generate \$300 million in new sales-tax revenue for Riverside County.

Liberty Quarry's location behind a ridgeline with direct access to Interstate 15 means it will not be seen, felt or heard by Temecula residents.

The health-risk analysis done for this project shows that emissions will be many times below any level that would be considered harmful even to the most sensitive people.

And now Granite Construction, who will run the Liberty Quarry, will be required to monitor the air and provide the data to the public to prove it. Life in Temecula will be the same as it is today and the facts plainly show this. The county has clearly shown that residents in Temecula will not see it, hear it or feel it.

The county's extensive study of the Liberty Quarry project confirms what I have believed all along -- this project makes sense environmentally and economically.

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Today, I am certainly not alone in supporting this project. Thousands of Riverside County residents, along with many cities, chambers of commerce and community organizations have all expressed their support for this vital project.

Please come to the Riverside Planning Commission hearing on April 26 and May 3 at 4:00 p.m. at Rancho Community Church, in Temecula and express your support for this vital project.

Your positive voice on making a change for the future needs to be heard.

This is the right project, in the right place and at the right time.