

SIERRA VIEWS

July 2018



In this issue:

A home away from home

SIERRA VIEWS

July 2018

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Inside this issue:

Kern River Brewing: A home away from home	3
GranFondo is a premier event	6
Tehachapi Mountain Festival turns 55	8
Bringing the desert to a screen near you	10
Cool off rafting the rapids of the Kern River	12

On the cover:

A sample of the brews available at Kern River Brewing Company, which presents itself as a home away from home.

To our readers:

East Kern Visions is now Sierra Views. This rebranding offers us a chance to broaden the publication's scope, expanding from the areas of the mountains and deserts of eastern Kern County to now cover the area up and down the Eastern Sierra and beyond. In this issue, we feature the highlands of the Kern River Valley and Tehachapi.



Kern River Brewing Company: A home away from home

BY CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Independent

Usually on an early Sunday morning, Kernville's Kern River Brewing Company's doors are locked, as it doesn't open until 11 a.m. But on this particular Sunday — the 2018 World Cup Final — the brewpub was bustling with patrons eager for some breakfast, conversation, a quality soccer match, and a few drinks to boot.

The packed house is no anomaly. In its 12 years of existence, the KRBC has established itself as a pillar of the Kernville community.

"I thought it would be a good fit for the town," said KRBC president Eric Giddens. "People thought it wouldn't last long, but the locals received us well."

The brewery also hosts other events, such as live music on Friday nights, beer and food pairings, and other sporting events that may take place in a different time zone, such as the Olympics.

"The biggest thing is that we're part of the community," Giddens said. "We stay open in the winter ... we employ 50 people; most people count on us. If you do your best job every day, you'll be fine."



CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON
/DAILY INDEPENDENT
**Eric Giddens, president
of the Kern River
Brewing Company,
pours a glass for a pa-
tron at the bar.**

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Humble beginnings

While living in San Diego, Eric and Rebecca Giddens made frequent trips to the Kern River to kayak. (Rebecca is a decorated kayaker, winning gold at the 2002 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships and silver at the 2004 Summer Olympics; while Eric finished 20th in the men's slalom K-1 at the 1996 Summer Olympics.)

After Eric received his Ph.D. in oceanography from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the Giddenses decided to open a small business, ultimately combining work and play.

"Eric and I were looking for something different, a new challenge," Rebecca said. "The pub was simple; it's like we are making beer based on what people want. It's just a whole other beast. We knew it would be different, but it's good."

As the locals latched on to the brewery, word-of-mouth helped it grow.

"We're the only brewery in town," Eric said. "We gotta get by a lot on word-of-mouth."

The relationship between the brewery and Kernville residents has been transactional. While the KRBC provides a "place to be" feel, the Giddenses have also learned how to manage living in a small town. (For the record, Eric is from Atlanta, while Rebecca is from Green Bay, Wisconsin.)

"In a big city, there's a lot of privacy," Eric said. "Here, everyone knows each other. ... It's been a bit of a change, but not a shock."

In-house brewing

The name Kern River Brewing



CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON
/DAILY INDEPENDENT

ABOVE: KRBC president Eric Giddens doesn't spend his time in the shadows. Here, he keeps himself busy, chatting with customers and even tidying up the brewpub. RIGHT: Rows of fermenters inside the new facility KRBC built two years ago.



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Company isn't a gimmick. Located downstairs are a few large fermenters — mainly for use inside the restaurant — but the meat of the process is located in a building behind the restaurant that opened two years ago, where anything canned, bottled, or kegged is created. The KRBC self-distributes in the Kern River Valley and nearby areas (such as Bakersfield), while it partners with Stone Brewing out of San Diego to distribute in Southern California.

Case in point, the KRBC combines mass-market distribution with the quality and care of a neighborhood brewery. Its flagship brews (all available on-tap) include a smooth-tasting Isabella Blond Ale, a rich Sequoia Red Ale, an aromatic Just Outstanding IPA, and a dark, yet flavorful, Class V Stout.

"I like IPAs, so Just Outstanding is my go-to," Eric said, noting that the IPA is named after a mountain bike trail and is the brewery's biggest seller. Isabella Blonde is also at the top of the chart, especially in summertime.

But the KRBC keeps its menu fluid, releasing a new beer "once or twice a month," Eric said. Its newest offering is the seasonal Paddle Left Hefe.

"The main thing is, you look at the season, what would be a really enjoyable beer?" Eric said. "There are so many different styles of beer. The first step is to sit down and think about what I would want. A lot of people come in and ask, 'Do you have a beer that tastes like such-and-such...?'"

Then, it's on to the laboratory downstairs, where the magic begins. During the brewery's first 10 years,



CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON/DAILY INDEPENDENT

ABOVE: A view of the facility at Kern River Brewing Company.

BELOW: From left to right, Isabella Blond, Sequoia Red, Just Outstanding IPA, and Class V Stout are some of the brews KRBC offers.



everything happened there, but, naturally, demand increased. Hence the new building, and the decision to keep things in the Kern River Valley.

"We chose to be here because of the quality of life," Rebecca said. "We love this valley so much. It's fun to get beer out all over California. And this area has so much to offer with mountain biking, climbing, rafting, and fishing."

The Backyard

The expansion didn't just end there. Seeking a challenge, the Giddenses opened "The Backyard," a restaurant located behind the pub that offers "fancier food" with sweeping views of the surrounding mountains. Also open seven days a week, The Backyard can also be rented out for a private party of 30-150 guests, for a fee.

As for the menu, as mentioned before, there is a distinct difference between offerings. The Backyard resembles more of a traditional restaurant, offering appetizers, hot sandwiches, barbecue pork, salmon, dessert, and even a kids menu. (Also of note, there is one free refill of soda, coffee, and tea, but not of beer.)

Make no mistake, the Giddenses enjoy living in Kernville and establishing themselves as an asset to the community. And to Kern River Valley visitors, the message is simple:

"You're here to have a good time to relax," Eric said. "People want to get a quick bite to eat then leave; that's not our style. Come in with a good attitude, order a pint, grab an appetizer, enjoy the view, and enjoy the company."



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Tehachapi GranFondo has grown to be the premier cycling event in the state

The Award-Winning Tehachapi GranFondo has grown to be the premier cycling event in the State of California. We welcome over 1,100 riders from hundreds of cities in California, the US, and even a few from outside the nation's borders. As a long distance, mass-start cycling event, the Tehachapi GranFondo is executed with the help of the entire community, and hundreds of volunteers, the Tehachapi GranFondo exceeds expectations again and again, and has been awarded 2015, 2016 and 2017's Best Century Ride in California by "Cycle California! Magazine."

This year's event is shaping up to be even better. As of the end of June, nearly 600 cyclists from over 130 cities have registered to enjoy one of the many routes being offered. The event is all about quality and not quantity with ride limited to 1,200 cyclists.

For beginners wanting to taste the excitement of a mass-start event, there is an 18-mile Fun Fondo. Intermediate riders can choose from the 32-mile Piccolo Fondo or the 62-mile Piccolo+ Metric-Century. For the advanced cyclist wanting to truly challenge themselves, the 84-mile MedioFondo and the 100-mile GranFondo rides await.

Over the course of the rides, participants will be welcomed by the various communities that make up the greater Tehachapi area, including Downtown Tehachapi, Alpine Forest, Stallion Springs, Bear Valley, Golden Hills, and Keene. Each of these communities offers a unique sensory experience as riders go from a charming downtown, to the wind turbine covered hills of East Kern, through the High Desert, into pine covered mountainsides, through organic farm land, and oak studded grasslands. There is truly something for everyone.

Festivities for the event begin at 6 p.m. in Downtown Tehachapi on Friday night, Sept. 16, with a locally-made pasta feed for \$22 a person. For more in-



The Tehachapi GranFondo is a large mass-start event, with 1,200 cyclists taking off at the same time, adding to the excitement.

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A team poses for the camera before the start of a previous Tehachapi GranFondo. This year's event is Sept. 14 and 15.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

formation, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tehachapi-granfondo-pre-ride-dinner-sponsored-by-lehigh-southwest-cement-tickets-47029823468>.

After enjoying some delicious Italian cuisine and a good night's sleep, participants will line up along Green Street with the mass-start being escorted through town at 7 a.m. For those who aren't ready to ride but want to experience the fun and excitement of the event, a festival will be held from 10 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 15, in Centennial Plaza, in Downtown Tehachapi. The festival will include music, food, and fun for the entire family.

So if you're an interested cyclist or just interested in cycling, Ride Up to Tehachapi on Sept. 14 and 15, 2018, for an outstanding weekend at the Tehachapi GranFondo.





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NICK SMIRNOFF/COURTESY OF GREATER TEHACHAPI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Tehachapi High School Warrior Band opens the festivities at a prior Tehachapi Mountain Festival. The 55th edition of the festival is set for Aug. 17 through 19.



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Tehachapi Mountain Festival celebrates 55 years

Going on 55 years, the Tehachapi Mountain Festival continues to draw people to the small East Kern County community.

The annual event kicks off the evening of Friday, Aug. 17, with a festival carnival at the corner of "D" and Robinson streets across from the Well School playground. At the same time, the VFW will be hosting live music and dancing at 221 W. Tehachapi Blvd.

Presale tickets at a reduced price will be available at the Greater Tehachapi Chamber of Commerce office on July 25. Presale tickets will be 20 tickets for \$15.00, at the carnival booth ticket prices will be one ticket for \$1.25, 20 tickets for \$20 and 50

tickets for \$40. Sunday, Aug. 19 will be "Pay One Price" day from 12-8 p.m. The pre-sale price for a wristband that will enable you to ride as often as you like will be \$25; on Sunday at carnival booth cost is \$30.

The fun continues Saturday morning for the athletically inclined and early birds with the Mountain Gallop 5K/10K race. Registration starts at 6:30 a.m. and starts at the Tehachapi Event Center & Rodeo Ground on North Dennison Road. For information call 661-822-3228 or to register to participate. The cost to enter is \$40 for 5K or \$45 for 10K up until Aug. 16. For the day of the race, it costs \$45 for the 5K and \$50 for the 10K.

For those eager to get a bite instead,



NICK SMIRNOFF/COURTESY OF GREATER TEHACHAPI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ABOVE: Attendees enjoy the nighttime carnival at the Tehachapi Mountain Festival. RIGHT: A scene from the PCRA rodeo at a past Tehachapi Mountain Festival.

the Royal Rangers Pancake Breakfast runs from 7 to 9:30 a.m., sponsored by the American Legion Post, at 221 Veterans Hall, 125 West "F" St.

The big draw for the Saturday morning festival stats at 10 a.m. as the Mountain Festival Parade starts marching down "F" Street from Mulberry Street to Hayes Street. The parade usually brings out 4,000 to 5,000 people and averages 100 entries ranging from local school bands and equestrian groups to commercial and service organization floats to color guards.

At Philip Marx Central Park from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., people can peruse the Arts and Crafts fair and park festival. Vendors from all over will have their wares on display. The festival carnival continues in its same location from noon to 11 p.m. The VFW will hold its dinner and dance at 221. W. Tehachapi Blvd.

The fun continues Sunday with the 21st Annual Thunder on the Mountain Car and Truck Show at Green and "F" streets in downtown Tehachapi from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The car show coincides with the last day of the Mountain Festival.

Hosted by the nonprofit of the same name, the volunteer-driven event strives to provide a venue to show off cars and trucks in Tehachapi while raising money for charities and scholarships. The event will have 37 different classes eligible to enter (a total limit of 300 entrants), a major raffle and 50/50 drawings and more. Entries can be done at www.thunderonthemountain.net and are \$35 (\$40 day of the show).

The Arts and Crafts fair also continues at Central Park on Sunday, from 10

a.m. to 5 p.m. and the carnival wraps up its final day from noon to 9 p.m.

For more information call the Greater Tehachapi Chamber of Commerce at 661-822-4180, email chamber@tehachapi.com or visit www.tehachapimountainfestival.com for all activity schedules.

PCRA Rodeo

Bull riding, roping and more continue as a core part of the Mountain Festival as the Tehachapi Mountain Rodeo Association hosts its 55th annual PCRA Rodeo on Aug. 17 and 18 at the Tehachapi Rodeo and Events Center on North Dennison Road.

"Family members of all ages will thrill to the high flying, head jerking, spine tingling excitement that only a day at the rodeo can bring," the Tehachapi Mountain festival states of the event. "Even the most seasoned rodeo fans will be delighted by the antics of the clowns and amazed at the bravery of the bullfighters."

The event starts Friday, Aug. 17. at 7 p.m. (gates open at 5 p.m.) and again on Saturday, Aug. 18. at 6 p.m. (gates open 4 p.m.). Pre-sale discounted tickets are available at the Greater Tehachapi Chamber of Commerce (209 E. Tehachapi Blvd.) and Tehachapi Albertsons.

Tickets are also available online (no discount) at www.eventbrite.com and available at the gate (\$17 for adults and \$15 for children ages 5-10, senior citizens \$65 and over and active and past military with ID).

For more information, visit <http://tehachapiprorodeo.com/> or call 661-557-7336.



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Bringing the desert to a screen near you

BY JESSICA WESTON
The Daily Independent



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Elizabeth Nalagan (left) and Doug Lueck with Alison Taylor of "A Wrinkle in Time" at the 2017 California on Location Awards.

If you have ever seen a movie, music video, car commercial or magazine layout with familiar desert scenery in the background, chances are the Ridgecrest Regional Film Commission had something to do with bringing that image to you.

Simply put, the RRFC is the first stop for anyone contemplating a film project in the greater Ridgecrest area. They accept applications for film permits, assist with casting, work with the Bureau of Land Management on locations and pretty much help expedite every aspect of filming.

Locations promoted by the RRFC include the Trona Pinnacles, Randsburg, Charlie's Place, Cuddeback Lakebed, the Inyokern Airport, Poison Canyon, and Sugarloaf Mountain as well as locations within the city of Ridgecrest itself and local scenes including military buildings.

Ridgecrest Regional Film Commissioner Doug Lueck and Executive Director Assistant Elizabeth Nalagan sat down with Sierra Views recently to talk about what they do. The conversation took place in a conference room at the Ridgecrest Area Convention and Visitors Bureau tourism (the RRFC is affiliated with the RACVB). Throughout the room were reminders of the longstanding relationship between Hollywood and the Mojave Desert. The walls featured posters from well-known films including Hulk, Star Trek V, Planet of the Apes, Bulletproof, Hidalgo, Dinosaur, A Man Apart, Wayne's World 2, Holes, Terminal Velocity, Tremors and Jurassic Park, all of which filmed in this area.

The RRFC was first recognized by the California Film Commission in 1993, although various projects filmed out here prior to that.

According to Lueck, prior to that the Bureau of Land Management dealt with the film process. The RRFC was formed to help expedite things and provide a central location to assist with information and filming permits.

Lueck said much filming still involves BLM, which gets into the act whenever federal land is used. Filming also takes place in the city or on private property and the RRFC can assist with these projects as well.

Lueck gave as an example a Kia commercial that filmed on Ridgecrest city streets in July.

"BLM wasn't involved in that," Lueck said. "What we had to do was pull a permit from the city and go through the workings with [the Ridgecrest Police Department] and we go ahead and get it permitted and then they can film on French and Las Flores Avenue."

The formation of the film commission makes the location-scouting process much easier on production companies. "[Before the RRFC] They didn't know where to go, how to do it. They were scattered all over the place, trying to figure out who owns that, what's that. So they can come to this office and they can say we are looking for that," Lueck explained. He said the RRFC can filter through the requests and run down whether desired locations are state or federal land or whatever.

"We just save them tons of money, that they don't have to research. We know," he said.

Many projects do still involve BLM land, and the RRFC has a very close relationship with BLM film liaison Elaine Hanson. Hanson was named Public Employee of the Year, Federal in the 2016 California On Location Awards, which celebrate members of California's film and television community who work on location.

The RRFC also advises private property owners, who don't always know what to do when they are approached by a production company interested in shooting on their private property. The commission assists homeowners in negotiating guidelines and agreements for film companies that want to use their property.

Nalagan said the commission advises private property owners to "make sure

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Lueck added that the RRFC has a contract they give property owners to guide them.

"If they follow the guidelines they are pretty safe," he said. He added that property owners should be sure to find out the production's storyboard and working hours, to avoid having neighbors awakened in the middle of the night if someone decides to shoot a scene involving a loud band.

Since filming takes place year round, they also advise production companies about the climate if need be.

"One of the things we need to let the production company know is about the heat so they take safety productions," Nalagan said. She added that the commission of course recommends sunscreen, water, hats and provides contact information for medical issues.

The commission also refers productions needing help with casting to Elena Vitale and her High Desert Talent Agency. Vitale, who is a local legend herself, is sufficiently well-known that she has an entry in the Internet Movie Database.

This lists The Brave (directed by and starring Johnny Depp and Marlon Brando), Pet Shop and Trona as movies she provided casting for. These movies all filmed in the greater Ridgecrest area, and many locals have stories about Johnny Depp who is usually described as "quiet," "down to earth," and "just a regular guy."

When the television show Westworld filmed in the area late last year, marketer Ramon Jaime assisted in getting the word out to Kern County radio and TV stations that the production needed 300 or so local extras.

The office in Ridgecrest logged 82 productions in 2017, 99 in 2016, 99 in 2015, and 58 in 2014. A total is obviously not available for 2018 yet, but Nalagan said as of mid-July there were three productions scheduled for July and at least three for August.

It seems to Sierra Views that a lot of the films made locally tend to be on the science fiction end of the spectrum, but Lueck and Nalagan said that the productions run the gamut of all types of works.

Nalagan said local productions include a lot of car commercials, as well as photo shoots, music videos, and then feature films, short films, independent films.

The list of celebrities who have completed work in the area is jaw-dropping. The Spice Girls and Madonna filmed (separately) at Cuddeback Lake back in the day. A partial list of those working here in the past includes Robert Downey Jr., George Clooney, and the classic Star Trek crew. To say nothing of Cindy Crawford during the time she was the most famous supermodel in the world.

More recently, Rihanna filmed the Star Trek Beyond music video and James Marsden filmed a Toyota commercial in this area. A Wrinkle in Time also recently filmed here.

Charlize Theron in 2016 took advantage of the stark beauty of Cuddeback Lake for a J'adore Dior fragrance commercial. Nalagan said this work was put together without the use of CGI. According to Nalagan, a plastic tarp was placed on the ground and filled with water for a sort of infinity effect in front of the beautiful mountains visible from the (normally) dry lake bed.

Asked if the work is as glamorous as it seems, Nalagan said it sometimes is. One thing the RRFC does, however, is provide complete discretion while the projects themselves are going on.

"When Rihanna was here they kept it so under wraps that none of the paparazzi or her fans [knew]," Nalagan said. She added that the film commission office has a confidentiality contract with the production companies.

"There's a lot of trust. That's why they will come out here," Lueck said.

Jaime is the commission's marketer, and markets through the California Film Commission and other groups. Lueck and Nalagan also attend film conferences and other events to help promote the area for production companies.

"We have been here so long that the word kind of filters down and people just know we promote deserts," Lueck said with a laugh. "So once you put that word out that we are deserts it kind of opens it up to what kind of deserts do you have?"

Nalagan added that one of the perks of the job is exposing the wider world to



JACK BARNWELL/DAILY INDEPENDENT
A commercial for the Kia Sportage compact crossover utility vehicle is filmed recently in Ridgecrest.

the beauty of the desert.

"It's an unknown beauty that is untapped," she said.

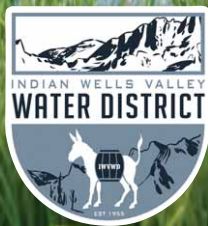


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A car crash scene from "Land of the Lost" filmed at the Trona Pinnacles.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Whitewater rafting on the Kern River is one great way to beat the heat this summer.

Feeling the heat? Kern River whitewater rafting is a hidden gem nearby

BY ANDREW SALMI
The Daily Independent

The sound of water calmly flowing downstream is one of the more peaceful things we as humans can enjoy as a way to help escape from our chaotic daily lives.

However, there are also some of us who enjoy that chaos of the rough current that is brought with whitewater rafting down the Kern River.

Living in the High Desert in the summer can be daunting for anyone, bringing

the all-important question: How do we all beat the heat?

One way lurks a bit more than an hour to the west, as in the Sierras resides a hidden gem: whitewater rafting along the Kern River.

Now, as someone who has gone river rafting plenty of times before up near Lake Tahoe down the Truckee River, I was able to simply pump up my own inner tube and coast down that river peacefully with a cold beer in hand.

As for the Kern River, being able to relax while the rapid current carries me down stream was hardly an option for a vast majority of this day.

Upon getting to the Kern River Outfitters building by Lake Isabella to meet up



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Whitewater rafting on the Kern River is one great way to beat the heat this summer.

with my rafting instructors and group, I equipped myself with a personal floatation device, a helmet, and sprayed on as much sunblock as I could before jumping on the bus to the launch site. I was pumped but definitely had some butterflies, as well.

Following a safety lecture by our great group of rafting instructors, it was finally time to split into our four rafts and get into the water. The Kern River current was moving pretty fast right from the get go, but it still wasn't anything compared to what was up ahead.

While going down some of the more mellow rapids at the beginning of the route, I took notice of the towering rock structures along the edges of the Kern River. On the rocks, there were lines marked on the rocks indicating that the water level used to be considerably higher in previous years compared to present day. This was confirmed to me by my rafting instructor, Matt Volpert, who was an absolute pleasure to be around and taught me all sorts of interesting factoids about the river.

On the patches of whitewater rapids, it was of utmost importance that my raft group was in-sync with our paddling routine when our instructor gave out the rowing commands. This was a great workout down the Kern River, to say the least.

To be honest, I was pretty impressed that I wasn't knocked out of the raft once because of the intense rapids, but I got absolutely soaked more times than I can count on my hands.

The more wet I got that day, the merrier. This was one of the best ways to beat the heat that I could possibly think of, and I was having a blast battling the rapids all day with a single paddle.

However, it certainly wasn't all rough. In a few spots of the river's route where the water was deep and the current was calm, many of my fellow rafters and I took full advantage to jump in and float with our feet downstream and heads tilted backwards.

That was truly heavenly, as the water was the perfect temperature and it put a

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Whitewater rafting on the Kern River is one great way to beat the heat this summer.

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huge smile on my face because I felt like Baloo the bear in “The Jungle Book” during the scene of the movie when he lazily floats down the river on his back.

Another thing that I really loved was my ability to simply leave all of my electronics in my car and enjoy nature for hours on a Sunday. Being able to leave the electronics in the car was a type of freedom not many people get to experience very often.

Afterward, I was very sore all over my body and in places I didn’t know could even become sore, and had plenty of water in my ears. But would I do it all over as soon as possible and jump in a raft again on those class four rapids, though?

Without a doubt! And with plenty of hot days ahead this summer, this is certainly an adventurous way to cool off.





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