

# Antelope Valley Press

More Antelope Valley People Read the Valley Press Than Any Other Newspaper

Established 1915. © 2013 Antelope Valley Newspapers, Inc. All rights reserved.

## From Mumbai to our Valley

### A NEW LANDMARK

The Valley's first Hindu temple is under construction at 30th Street West and Columbia Way (Avenue M) in Lancaster. The Hindu Temple of the Antelope Valley, which has been in the planning stages for a number of years, is on 2.5 acres of land on the northeast corner of Columbia Way, next to Hull Park and across the street from Paraclete High School.

**RON SIDDLE**  
Valley Press



By **GERRY PRICE**  
Valley Press City Editor/Assignments

LANCASTER — Soon, if you want to get a good look at the changing face of religion in the Antelope Valley, your best destination probably will be 30th Street West between Avenue L-8 and Columbia Way (Avenue M).

Where once the most noticeable landmark in that area was Paraclete High School, the Catholic bastion of secondary educa-

## Hindu temple nearing finish of construction

tion now shares that distinction with a Sikh center that opened in May, and, soon, with the soaring spire of the Valley's first Hindu temple.

The Hindu Temple of the Antelope Valley, which has been in

the planning stages for a number of years, is under construction on 2.5 acres of land on the northeast corner of Columbia Way, next to Hull Park and across the street from Paraclete.

The first phase of the Hindu

facility, which includes the 2,200-plus-square-foot main temple and a 2,100-square-foot adjoining hall, plus nearby administrative facilities, should be open near the end of the year, according to Eric Kelly of Toneman Development Corp., the general contractor for the project.

A second phase will add a courtyard, a kitchen and utility room, a covered walkaway and

See **TEMPLE** on A5



# TEMPLE: Antelope Valley worship centers experience growth

From A1

five smaller worship pavilions.

The infrastructure for the complex has already been completed, including parking spaces.

Architect Cyrus Subawalla of Chicago-based CSA Partners Inc. described the project as a blend of traditional and modern styles, with the temple itself, though traditional, also somewhat of an amalgam of the varying styles of temples found in India. Meanwhile, the pillarless main hall will be "very modernistic," and somewhat minimal in design.

Subawalla, whose firm has designed a wide range of religious structures in the United States and India, including a Zoroastrian temple in India, said temples in India vary in terms of design between the north and south. For example, the typical spire of a temple in the south is more trapezoidal, while those in the north are more tapered ("corn cob-shaped" was the closest he could come in describing it).

The interior structure of Lancaster temple's spire is trapezoi-

dal, but it will have the tapering on the outside. "The main dome takes (its design) from the earliest Hindu temples," Subawalla said.

Toneman's Kelly, a 35-year veteran of the construction industry, describes the project as "one of the most interesting yet challenging projects I've ever wanted to work on," and describes the backers of the project, who have asked to remain anonymous, as "a super wonderful group of people." He described the architect as a "spectacular talent."

For his part, Subawalla said, "Toneman has shown a particular finesse" in working with himself and project's backers. Both men said their working relationship has avoided the conflicts that many architects and contractors encounter when attempting to make the original concept become a reality. Both men said that a phalanx of subcontractors have been employed to construct many of work on items unique to a Hindu temple.

The two men also praised the help of the city of Lancaster and of Mayor R. Rex Parris' office in mak-

ing the project a reality, with Subawalla commenting that the city "had the best interests of the town and of the temple in mind" in its interaction with project managers.

While some statistics indicate that only about 5.5% of those who describe themselves as religious are non-Christian in a community numerically dominated by Roman Catholics (69.1%), the new Hindu complex is just one indication of local growth in that area.

Another faith that has shown recent growth in the Valley is Sikhism, like Hinduism an India-based religion. In addition to the Antelope Valley Sikh Center next to Paraclete High, Sikhs recently purchased property on Eighth Street East and Avenue P-8 from Unity of Antelope Valley, which outgrew the location and moved its services to the Hilton Garden Inn, and have opened a worship center there.

Judaism and Islam have long been established in the Valley. The longest-established Jewish congregation, and the Valley's oldest non-Christian worship group, is Congregation Beth Kneset

Bamidbar, which traces its roots to nine families that began weekly Shabbat services in Lancaster in January 1951. The congregation moved into its present building in 1963.

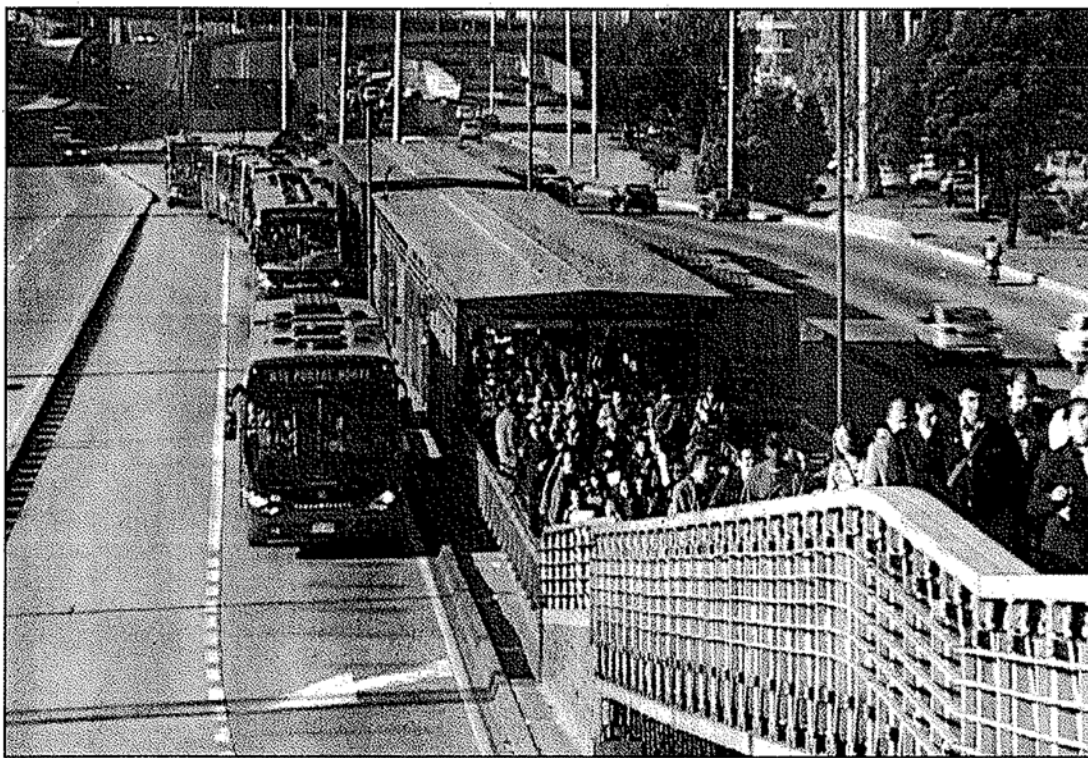
Two other Jewish groups are the Chabad Center of the Antelope Valley headquartered on 45th Street West in Quartz Hill and the home-based Beit Or Havurah of the Antelope Valley established by the late Rabbi David Hoffman who had previously served at Beth Kneset Bamidbar.

The first Islamic worship center to open in the Valley was the Islamic Center of North Valley on Fourth Street East and Avenue L-4 in Lancaster, which opened in 1993, about four years after four families began to gather in private homes in 1989.

The Masjid of Antelope Valley, a part of the American Institute of the Antelope Valley, which also includes elementary and secondary charter schools in the city and a cemetery in Rosamond, is on Palmdale Boulevard near 11th Street East. It also opened in 1993.

Other faiths in the Valley include the Antelope Valley Baha'i Institute in Lancaster and Palmdale, the Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of the Antelope Valley and the Konkko Mission of Lancaster at Avenue K-7 and 25th Street West. Konkoyo, a relatively new religion of Japanese origin, is described as a sectarian offshoot of Shinto, the official Japanese religion.

[gprice@avpress.com](mailto:gprice@avpress.com)



Antelope Valley Transit Authority

**A VALLEY FIRST** — Passengers disembark from articulated TransMilenio "bus rapid transit" buses in Bogota, Colombia, similar to one proposed for 10th Street West between Lancaster Boulevard and the Antelope Valley Mall.

## BUSES

From A1

tions, the transit plan says.

could connect AVTA buses to the proposed California high-speed rail station in Palmdale, the plan says.

The plan also notes that Sierra Highway is an alternative route for

**FREE!**  
**CLASSIFIED AD**  
**3-LINES**  
**7-DAYS**

for items under \$300<sup>00</sup>

**661-940-1000**

*Valley Press*

