Historical Perspective

On October 31, 1864, Nevada became the 36th state in the union and that same year the first settlers took up ranching in the Lamoille Valley, which a mere five years later would become part of the newly established Elko County. In 1867 Tuscarora was founded and the first permanent settlers established ranches in Starr Valley and South Fork Valley.

With the arrival of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1868, Elko, Carlin and Wells were established. That same year the Idaho Central Wagon Road connected Carlin to the mines in Silver City, Idaho. Mountain City was also founded.

On March 5, 1869, by act of the Nevada Legislature, Elko County, the fourth largest county in the continental United States, was created. A special election was held on June 21, 1869 where Len Wines, J. Pierson and J.H. Lettingwell were elected as the first Commissioners of Elko County.

One of their first acts was to commission the building of a courthouse and jail. On January 10, 1870, the Commissioners accepted the completed Elko County Courthouse building at a cost of $22,942.48.

The University of Nevada was first established in Elko in 1874. It was moved to Reno in 1886. President Rutherford B. Hayes, established the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in 1887.

The Elko County Board of Education established the first county high school in 1895 and around the late 1800s, one of the first female doctors in Nevada, Doctress A.C. Buchins, practiced medicine in Elko. On June 20, 1890, Elizabeth Potts, was hung for murder. She was the only female ever executed in Nevada.

The Jarbidge Gold Boom began in 1908 and lasted until 1935. Jarbidge was officially founded in 1910.

December 5, 1916 became infamous as the date of the world's last stagecoach robbery and murder, which took place in Jarbidge Canyon. William Smith founded Wendover in 1917 and the legislature authorized the incorporation of the City of Elko. In 1918 President Woodrow Wilson established the Elko Indian Colony by executive order. It was later relocated in 1931.

1927 saw the first completely automatic hydroelectric system in Nevada planned and organized by H.H. Cazier at Wells. It was the first rural electrification system. In 1934 construction began on Wildhorse Dam and Reservoir on the Oywhee River. In 1956, Jackpot, the community near the Idaho border, was founded.

Newmont Mining Company opened its extensive gold mining operation near Carlin in 1965 and still operates today along with Barrick Goldstrike and several other international and national mining companies.

The National Basque Festival began in 1963 in Elko, which celebrates the Basque heritage every July. Elko County gained a treasure in 1968 with the establishment of the Northeastern Nevada Museum. The world famous Cowboy Poetry Gathering started in Elko in 1985 and continues to draw cowboys and spectators from all over the world each January.

On September 23, 1992 the Elko County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and in 1993 Elko was named one of the 100 Best Small Towns in America.

In June of 1998, Elko County sold their county-owned hospital to Province Healthcare, who in 2001 completed a new $60 million dollar, state of the art hospital and medical center for the region. LifePoint Hospitals now runs this 75 all private bed rooms facility.

The new century saw Great Basin College, established in 1967, adding several 4 year degree programs, a new technology center and health sciences building and are continually expanding their facilities, degrees and services.

Elko County has led the way in many firsts for the state of Nevada and has produced five Nevada Governors. Strong beliefs and pride in an independent spirit, traditions and guaranteed freedoms keep this county in the forefront of protecting its citizens and natural resources while still working towards a prosperous environment in which to live, work, raise children and retire. Not to mention having some of the most beautiful landscapes in Nevada from the Ruby Mountains to our desert lands.