

SOLEDAD/ Summer festivals draw many

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from several south county communities.

Its library is connected to the high school and stays open late to accommodate students who are finishing homework.

“The community center, high school and library — you won’t see anything like that in Monterey County,” Mayor Richard Ortiz said. Soledad is flourishing, although, Ortiz said, it remains a “small, quiet community.”

He points to renovations along Front Street in downtown and two new schools — Jack Franscioni Elementary and Frank Ledesma Elementary — as signs the city is planning for the future.

The development in Soledad, Ortiz said, “is smart growth; it’s something the community has been looking forward to.”

Every year, the city comes together to enjoy its environment in family-friendly settings. The annual Wind and Wine Festival is held in August and the city hosts Soledad Fiesta Days,

AT A GLANCE

n **INCORPORATED:** 1921

n **POPULATION:** 27,316

n **MAYOR/COUNCIL:** Mayor Richard Ortiz, Mayor Pro Tem Juan Saavedra, Councilman Christopher Bourke, Councilwoman Stefanie De La Rosa and Councilwoman Patricia Stephens.

n **REGULAR MEETINGS:** City Council, 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month at City Hall, 248 Main St., Soledad; Planning Commission second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

n **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:** City Hall 678-3963; police department 678-1332; fire department 678-2054; housing authority 678-3686; library 678-2430; YMCA 678-1239.

n **ONLINE:** www.cityofsoledad.com.

n **ISSUES:** Commercial development and housing.

three days of carnival fun and dancing at Vosti Park, in June.

King City recovers from a rough patch

City features south county’s only airport, nine-hole golf course

Staff report

King City is looking to the future. This south Monterey County city is on the path of recovery after surviving a rough patch that included an expensive botched redevelopment deal, serious financial problems and administrative turnover.

The city has gone from having a deficit to having a healthy general fund balance and is working to entice developers and investors.

Doreen Liberto-Blanck, a planning

consultant for the city, said the community is growing.

“We have seen an increase in the number of building permits,” Liberto-Blanck said.

After doubling its population between 1980 and 2000, King City is poised to keep growing like other swelling Salinas Valley cities.

The CreekBridge, Mills Ridge and Royal Coach subdivisions are contributing to that growth.

The city has attractions unique to south county, including a small airport, a nine-hole golf course, a newly expanded community hospital, a community college branch campus and a new city industrial park. Nearby are some of the world’s richest farm fields and vineyards.

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