

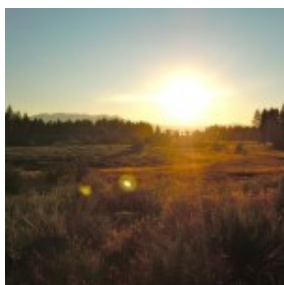
# Opinion: Plenty of reasons to visit Nevada

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

When I lived in Flagstaff, Ariz., I was always astonished to run into a local resident who had never been to the Grand Canyon.

Every year, people travel thousands of miles to see what arguably is the most spectacular natural attraction on the planet. Yet there were people who lived just over an hour away and had never been there.

I made it my quest to see as much of the Grand Canyon as I could and to head all directions in the state to see all of Arizona.



Rabe Meadow in Stateline provides a scenic walk to Nevada Beach. Photo/LTN file

Now, I'm a Nevadan and I made it my objective to see as much of this state as I can.

Lucky for me, with relatives in Elko and children attending the University of Nevada, I've been able to put together side

trips to some of the places many of us have heard about but few have seen.

Over the years, I've made it to about half of Nevada's 24 state parks, driven the "Loneliest Road" (U.S. 50 across the center of the state), the Extraterrestrial Highway (Nevada State Route 375) and hiked and explored national parks on the state's western border (Death Valley), eastern border (Great Basin) and southern tip (Lake Mead).

One of these days, I'll get to Black Rock Desert and find my way to the Fly Geyser. Nevada is blessed with remarkably rugged beauty, north and south. Visitors to our state often discover this by accident when they stumble upon our scenery when indulging in the attractions that make us famous worldwide, the Las Vegas Strip.

How many of the thousands of Southern Nevada residents have never seen Valley of Fire or Cathedral Gorge state parks? Both are easy day trips from Las Vegas. How many have never checked out the spring blooms in Death Valley or the sand dunes near Amargosa?

Only recently had I made my first visit to Nelson. It's only an hour away from home and it's a scenic and historic treasure.

**Read the whole story**