

Driving on Nevada highways is a trip through history

By Marlo Bartlett Pesek, Las Vegas Review Journal

Most of Nevada's highways began as old trails that were paved over.

Native people first conquered Nevada's distances on foot, finding routes between water sources. After they acquired horses, they could go farther but still had to utilize available water and find forage.

When Europeans explored the continent, they used the same routes on foot or horseback but had to adapt old trails for wheeled vehicles pulled by horses, mules or oxen. Later, railroads altered routes to meet specific requirements. The automobile eventually dictated that most routes would be paved.

Explore Nevada on any of its major highways for a journey through history. Nevadans vacationing in their own state see unusual places and meet fascinating people. Unfortunately, many Nevadans living in our urban areas seldom venture beyond city streets. They miss what savvy foreign visitors travel thousands of miles to see. Travel websites lead many Europeans to our intriguing rural communities, ghost towns, remote deserts and lofty mountains. These intrepid travelers fly into our cities, rent RVs or motorcycles and set out bravely into our lonely, majestic distances for adventures most Nevadans don't bother to experience.

Because Nevada is so large and still sparsely populated, road travelers must plan for long distances. For safety's sake, top off your fuel tank whenever you can, for the next service station might be half a tank away. Check your spare tire and know how to change a flat. Carry sufficient water for your

vehicle and a gallon of drinking water for each person. Pack some nutritious snacks. Make sure everyone has a long-sleeved cover-up, for most places in Nevada cool off sharply at night, even in summer. Expect that cellphones will not work in some areas of Nevada. If you break down, stay with your vehicle.

Read the whole story