

Loneliest road in America suits Nev. residents just fine

By John M. Glionna, Las Vegas Review-Journal

BAKER – In 1977, when Highway 50 was still the road less traveled, just another anonymous stretch of asphalt traversing the American West, Denys Koyle's life took an unpredictable turn.

At age 28, she moved her young family from Huntington Beach, California, to this windblown frontier town on the state line between Nevada and Utah. She founded the Border Inn and scratched out a living tending to the occasional motorist who passed her ramshackle spread that baked under a relentless sun amid skittering lizards and prickly desert scrub brush.

To squeeze out the day's last dollar, she would stand on the empty roadway well after dark, gazing up a 19-mile grade east into Utah: If she saw headlights descending, she'd stay open. Most times she closed.

That was before Highway 50 became famous.

It was an unlikely stroke of luck for Koyle and countless merchants along this meandering two-lane road that bisects Nevada's midsection like an unadorned cowboy belt: In 1986 – three decades ago this year – the old highway became known as “The Loneliest Road in America.”

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