

# VALLEY VOICE

---

## Plainview Opens New Park Through Aid of County, Other Local Agencies

July 8, 2016

By Nancy Vigran



Five-year-old Darlene slides down the new playground equipment at the Plainview Neighborhood Park grand opening in June. “Thank you, thank you, thank you,” Domitila Lemus told Tulare County Supervisor Alan Ishida during the June grand opening of the Plainview Neighborhood Park. Lemus, who has lived in the unincorporated area of the county for 30 years, said the park is “a dream come true.”

The park has been one of the things on Ishida’s to-do list since he was first elected 11 years ago. It involved several agencies including the county, Plainview Water Mutual, El Quinto Sol de America and Self Help Enterprises.

“I think every community needs one of these,” Ishida said. “The communities can help to organize these. The people in Plainview have come to all of our meetings [regarding the park] – that makes it very easy for us to help them.”

Regular meetings were held to bring the county and local residents together in anticipation of the park and other community projects. El Quinto Sol de America served as community outreach in finding out just what the community needed and wanted. The children played an integral part of the park development, laying out swatches (designed by the architects) throughout the park as to where everything should be placed.

The park cost approximately \$320,000 which includes adjoining roadwork, electricity and fencing, said Eric Coyne of the county’s Economic Development Office. The property belongs to Plainview Water Mutual and most of the funding came through grant sources including the state’s Housing Reward Parks Program, Coyne said.

There was a 60-day time restriction to get the park built, once funding was awarded. Safety was a very important issue, Coyne said, and the park is ADA compliant. All agencies involved worked closely with the community to get the park done.

Included is covered playground equipment and a basketball court. The park has lighting for evening use and safety, including the basketball court. Electrical upgrades were needed, which also helped many of the residences in the area.

And, while Plainview is generally a pretty quiet community, the Sheriff’s Department intends to increase patrols of the area, said Sargent Nathan Polk.

“This is great for the local community,” he said.

The park area will receive regular patrolling every eight to 10 hours and whenever a patrolman is in the area, he or she will also cruise by the park, Polk added.

Maintenance of the park is up to the community. It is the hope that Plainview will take great pride in the park, and keep it clean and free from graffiti.

“It’s a good feeling, there’s been hardly anything for the kids to do [in the area],” said Janie Hernandez, who lives just blocks from the park with her family and five children. “It’s nice to have shade for the kids to play in.”

Despite the fact that the county is not in the business of building parks, “this was one of Supervisor Ishida’s first initiatives,” Coyne said. “He never said ‘no,’ he has supported this community all the way.”

Plainview is one of 81 unincorporated communities throughout Tulare County. The county is working hard on developing quality-of-life improvements to them as it sees funding opportunities. Most of these improvements include water and sewer issues.

Plainview is also in need of sewer work. The 220-properties in the community are on very old septic systems, some of which are failing and they lie very close to wells, as each property is quite small, Coyne said. The county is looking into the possibility of developing sewer infrastructure into one of the neighboring communities system.

This would mean that community is in agreement – the county is currently in discussions with the City of Lindsay. If done, Plainview residents may need to pay sewer fees to Lindsay, something that the community needs to agree upon. The county would seek grant funding to help pay for the sewer line between the two areas.

Other communities that have received recent work and community upgrades include Tipton, Terra Bella, Seville and Goshen.