City of Sunnyvale History and Profile

From its humble beginnings as a small agricultural settlement in 1845, through its incorporation as a City in 1912, Sunnyvale has grown to become the "Heart of the Silicon Valley". Change has been constant and sometimes dramatic. Sunnyvale's history has always been based on its economy. Initially, the area's vast open space and fertile soil were ideal for the fruit orchards that supported the settlement's first residents. With the arrival of the railroad in 1864, the economic base of the community was able to expand, as canneries to process the fruit from the surrounding orchards were built near the rail lines. In 1906, the Hendy Iron Works relocated from San Francisco to Sunnyvale, continuing the area's industrial development. By 1940, the population had grown to about 4,400 and the Hendy Iron Works was taken over by Westinghouse to support the war effort. After the war, the defense-related industry arrived, capitalizing on the pleasant climate and Moffett Naval Air Station. Lockheed Missiles and Space Division was established in 1956, and soon became Sunnyvale's largest employer. The 1950's and 1960's became the periods of largest growth for the community, resulting in a population of 96,000 in 1970. The defense era gave way to the high-tech era when the microprocessor was introduced in 1971. During the years that followed, companies with foresight saw the potential of computers and the power of semiconductors. The City became the nexus of research, development and manufacturing that created Silicon Valley, and that legacy continues today in the era of the Internet.

The residents, businesses and visitors of the City of Sunnyvale take great pride in being a part of this progressive, well-managed and nationally recognized Silicon Valley community. Visitors and residents enjoy Sunnyvale's beautiful, clean suburban setting, efficient, high-quality city services, low crime rate, quality schools and 18 prize-winning parks. Through its innovative and cost effective Public Safety Department concept, which combines traditional fire and police functions into one department, the City offers its citizens and businesses an award-winning record of safety and efficiency. Some of the nation's most successful business and industrial leaders have moved to or been founded in Sunnyvale. Residents can drive within an hour to many distinguished educational institutions, including Stanford University, San Jose State University, Santa Clara University, and University of California. Cogswell, Foothill, De Anza, West Valley and Mission Community Colleges are only minutes away offering high quality community college classes and programs. Sunnyvale's commitment to every citizen within the community sets it apart. High quality parks, a full service library, promotion of cultural arts activities and strong support for maintenance and repair of public facilities, reflect this commitment. The City is less than an hour from the Pacific Ocean, an easy one day roundtrip to California's famous redwood forests or beautiful Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada for summer exploring and winter skiing. In the greater Sunnyvale area, theaters, concert halls, museums, libraries and art galleries fill the most demanding cultural need. The City offers shopping convenience and variety with more than 49 neighborhoods and regional centers, including downtown shopping at the Town and Country Shopping Center and Murphy Avenue, a unique and historic business district.

Welcome to Sunnyvale, the Heart of the Silicon Valley!