

**Community Focus Statement B: Maintain the rural desert lifestyle and character.**

**Action Statement B.1: Establish a welcome program to greet new residents, educate them on the unique desert experience, and offer them information regarding the community.**

**B**

**Benchmark:** All new residents of Joshua Tree are greeted with information and education regarding the community and introduced to long-term residents who can serve as resources.

**Champion:** Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

**Estimated Cost:** Variable depending on programs offered.



Joshua Tree welcome sign. Photo source: Michael Baker International

To maintain the rural desert lifestyle of the community, Joshua Tree residents can develop a welcome program for newcomers to provide helpful information and properly greet new residents. Depending on where new residents are from, they could have little to no knowledge about rural, desert living in unincorporated communities. Current residents could offer practical information to newcomers, aid the transition from their previous home, and properly acclimate new residents to Joshua Tree.

Joshua Tree is particularly unique given the desert environment and proximity to Joshua Tree National Park. The rural characteristics,

including the natural landscape, openness, and dark skies, are community assets to preserve and maintain for future generations. The welcome program should introduce new residents to the core character and values of Joshua Tree, and help foster an appreciation for the desert environment and community. This process will help new residents learn and honor the values of Joshua Tree and integrate into the community.

A welcome program could be hosted in a variety of ways. It could be a formal program with regularly scheduled meetings for newcomers to learn more about Joshua Tree and create relationships with other community members. It could include providing a standardized welcome packet of information, including helpful community resources, to the homes of all new residents. A welcome program could be as informal as having long-term residents reach out to newcomers to introduce themselves as a community resource, if newcomers should have any questions about life in Joshua Tree. The program could be flexible to meet the community's needs, as the number of new community members fluctuates.

Currently, the Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce offers a relocation packet, available upon request. The Chamber of Commerce website also lists all important community phone numbers for emergency contacts, utilities, and other

community organizations. This information could serve as the foundation for a more developed welcome program that goes beyond providing basic contact information for community resources. A welcome program allows long-time residents to communicate the values of Joshua Tree residents, and newcomers would benefit from a deeper understanding of their new home.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Contact residents and organize volunteers to serve on a welcome committee.	Champion with Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce	Years 1 – 3	Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce, Relocation Packet
2. Select a leader to serve as chair of the welcome committee.	Joshua Tree welcome committee	Years 1 – 3	<a href="http://joshuatreechamber.org/relocate/">http://joshuatreechamber.org/relocate/</a>
3. Develop community core values to convey to new residents.	Joshua Tree welcome committee	Years 1 – 3	Perkasie Borough Welcome Packet:
4. Develop a welcome program around the community core values, using the Chamber of Commerce’s existing Relocation Package as a starting point.	Joshua Tree welcome committee	Years 1 – 3	<a href="http://perkasieborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014_12_29_Welcome_Packet.pdf">http://perkasieborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014_12_29_Welcome_Packet.pdf</a>
5. Engage new residents as they move to Joshua Tree in the welcome program, with a focus on communicating the core Joshua Tree values.	Joshua Tree welcome committee	On-going	Riverton City Welcome Packet: <a href="http://www.rivertoncity.com/community/welcome_packet_2012.pdf">http://www.rivertoncity.com/community/welcome_packet_2012.pdf</a>
6. Seek feedback from new residents on the welcome program.	Joshua Tree welcome committee	Annually	
7. Revisit the welcome program to refresh and update with relevant information and feedback from new residents who participated in the program.	Joshua Tree welcome committee	Annually	