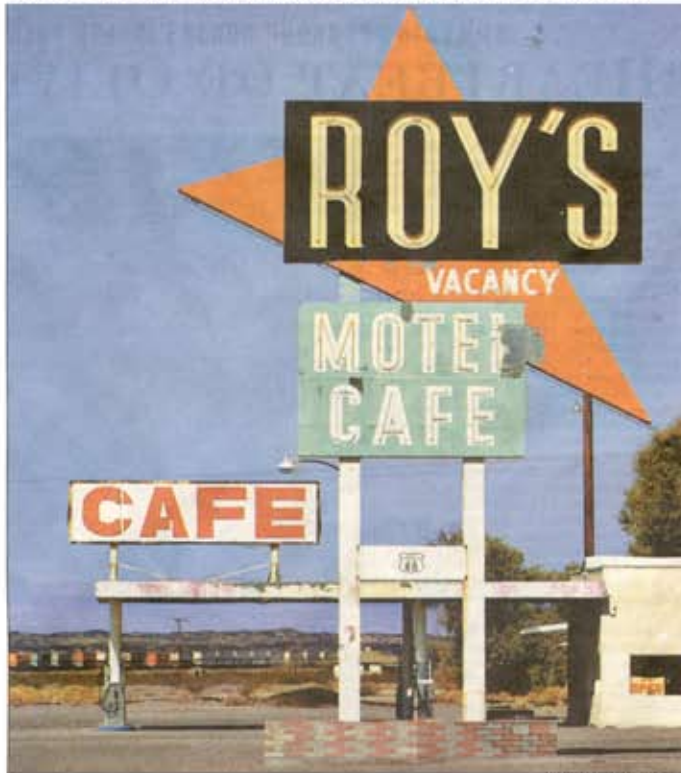


THE PRESS - ENTERPRISE

ROUTE 66 STOP: TOWN'S OWNER PLANS RESTORATION



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Albert Okura purchased the town of Amboy, which includes Roy's Cafe, a gas station, a motel building, an airplane hanger and a church, all of which are closed.

Includes Roy's Cafe and adjacent gas station, a town office, a motel building with cottages, a restroom, an airplane hanger and a church, all closed. Bonnie Barnes, Burris' granddaughter, said the post office is the only piece of Amboy still open.

At its peak in the 1950s, Amboy had a population of more than 800 and served as a key stop along Route 66. When Interstate 40 opened in 1972, the traffic moved north and Amboy became another fading oasis in the desert. Amboy's schoolhouse closed in 1999 when the last of its students moved away.

Amboy is nearly a ghost town today, but Barnes said the highway is starting to see cars again as the desert's population grows.

The town made news two years ago when owners Walt Wilson and Timothy White auctioned it on eBay. The highest bid, \$995,900, was below the undisclosed minimum bid and the sale didn't proceed. The asking price was \$1.9 million.

Burris, who sold the town to Wilson and White in 2000, regained the town in a foreclosure this year.

As she prepared to sign her name to documents closing the sale, Burris, 89, talked about her memories of the town.

"We used to have a lot of fun,"

GREEN FOR ACRES

City sold — lock, stock and restroom

BY PAUL HERRERA
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

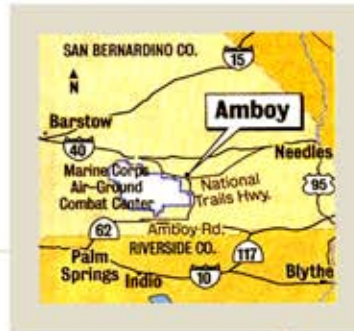


Okura said he paid \$425,000 for the 690 acres that make up Amboy.

For roughly the median price of a home in Redlands, Juan Pollo founder Albert Okura bought himself a town.

Amboy, a desert relic along historic Route 66, gained a new owner Tuesday afternoon. Bessie Burris, who owned the land with her late husband, Buster, signed over the deed to Okura on Tuesday in downtown San Bernardino.

Okura said he paid \$425,000 for the 690 acres that is Amboy. The land



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2003/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

The post office is the only piece of Amboy still open, said Bonnie Barnes, the granddaughter of Bessie Burris, who owned the land with her late husband.

AMBOY

SOLD for \$425,000 to Juan Pollo founder Albert Okura

POPULATION peaked near 800 in the 1950s. Fewer than 10 people since at least 2000.

FOUNDED in 1858 as a mining town.

Burris said, standing in a shaded spot outside First American Title. "We had motorbikes, we had a houseboat. We had every-

thing we wanted."

The sale price is less than a quarter of the asking price from two years ago and less than other offers, Barnes said. The family chose to sell to Okura on the promise that he will preserve and restore Amboy as part of the lore of Route 66, she said.

Okura said his first task will be to restore electricity and basic utilities to the town. He then plans to reopen the restroom near the gas station, and work on getting the motel, café and gas station ready to reopen.

And no, there won't be a Juan Pollo in Amboy. But that doesn't mean the town won't help his business.

"I will get much more goodwill from restoring Amboy than anything else I could do with it," Okura said.

The company is planning a broad expansion into desert communities, and Okura said he hopes Amboy will be a friendly gesture toward residents he wants to court as customers.

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