

The town of North Fork is located at almost the exact geographical center of California. A special monument, established by the North Fork History Group and featured on one of Huell Houser's *California Gold* television episodes denoting the very spot, is a few miles from downtown.

North Fork was established in the mid 1800's with a few lumber mills which provided lumber for gold miners in the beginning, and then the booming building industry in California. It grew from a small settlement on Willow Creek (which was originally called the North Fork of the San Joaquin River, and thus the town's name) into a booming lumber town in the 1950's to 1990's. Unfortunately, with increasing restrictions on logging, the Lumber Mill, the main employer in the area, shut down. After a period of decline, North Fork is making an economic revival.

One can find full services and shops in town, including a supermarket, mini marts, hardware stores, a post office, restaurants, a saloon, a coffee shop, gift shops, gas stations, auto parts stores, a video store, and the US Forest Service Office with information and maps of the area.

The community of North Fork is a gateway to one of the most spectacular wilderness areas in the Sierra. Prepare for camping, fishing, backpacking, hiking, water sports, mountain biking, snow sports and other recreational activities by shopping for your provisions in the many stores on quaint Main Street. There is access to Bass Lake, Redinger Lake, and Mammoth Pool from the town. The Sierra Vista National Scenic Byway (www.sierravistascenicbyway.org), a 100 mile loop of beautiful scenery from the foothills to the crest of the Sierra begins here.

It is also a cultural gateway into the past history of the Sierra. It boasts one of the first US Forest Service Offices and compounds established in the United States, (www.fs.fed.us/r5/about/history/forest-dates.html), the site of a lumber mill established in the 1940's, historic buildings, and one of the finest Native American museums outside of Sacramento, the Sierra Mono Museum (www.sierramonomuseum.org), and more.

Throughout the year North Fork is home to community events that draw people from all over central California. Summer brings the Art in the Garden show, the Mid Sierra Logger's Jamboree, Indian Fair Days, and the Mountain Classic Car Show. The first weekend in October is reserved for the Grizzly Century Bike Ride & North Fork Fall Festival, followed by Sierra Art Trails. The winter holiday season would not be complete without a shopping spree the first Saturday in December at the Booster's Christmas Bazaar.

A good taste of the past and present can be seen in the many murals on buildings and walls throughout the town. Local artists have depicted scenes such as the inside of the old lumber mill, downtown in the 1800's and Native American artifacts. Future murals are underway. The attention they attract have helped citizens and visitors become more interested in the local history and culture.

Besides many small retail and service businesses that keep the local economy alive, this small rural town boasts several community and service organizations. Among them are the North Fork Chamber of Commerce, the North Fork Boosters, the North Fork

Women's Club, the North Fork Community Development Council, the Sierra Vista Scenic Byway Association, the North Fork History Group, the North Fork Arts Council, the North Fork Food Co-op, Kern Family Farm, Three Springs Flower Garden, the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians, The Sierra Mono Museum and the Lions Club.

Visitors and locals alike enjoy the friendly hospitality that is North Fork. Come and experience this rural paradise for yourself.