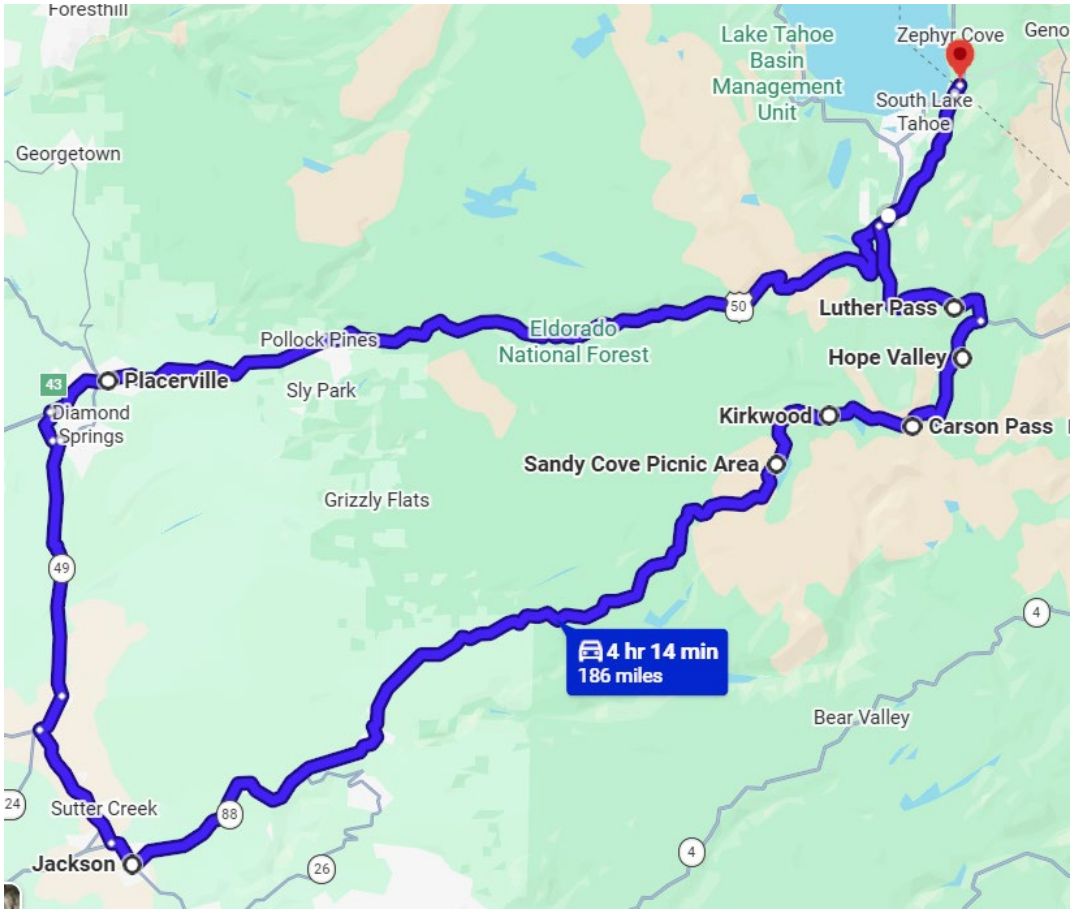
HEALEY 75th ANNIVERSARY MEET

OPTIONAL SCENIC DRIVES AND TOURS

ECHO SUMMIT, CARSON PASS

AND HWY 49 (GOLD RUSH COUNTRY)

Drive Time = 4:00 hours, 185 miles, roundtrip, counter-clockwise



SUGGESTED DAY PLAN

9:00 am	**Depart South Lake Tahoe on Hwy 50**
10:15 am	**Arrive Placerville — coffee / Main Street (30–40 min)**
Noon	**Arrive Jackson — lunch and optional short walk (60 min)**
1:15 pm	**Begin CA 88 climb; scenic pauses as parking permits**
2:30–3:30 pm	**Silver Lake / Kirkwood, Carson Pass and Hope Valley**
4:00–4:30 pm	**Return to South Lake Tahoe (estimate)**

WESTBOUND: TAHOE TO THE MOTHER LODE

US 50 — From Wagon Road to Lincoln Highway

The modern highway follows a long-used Sierra crossing corridor. The Pony Express operated in this region in 1860–61, carrying mail by relay riders; the service ended after completion of the transcontinental telegraph. In 1913, the Lincoln Highway movement promoted a coast-to-coast motor route, including a southern Sierra branch through the US 50 corridor. Imagine crossing these mountains in a primitive touring car with narrow tires, unreliable brakes and no roadside assistance.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Turn Right out of the hotel
- In 0.6 miles, at stoplight, Left onto Pioneer Trail
- In 8.0 miles, at T and stoplight, Left onto Hwy 50 West
- In 54.3 miles, take Exit 47 “Mosquito Road / Main St”. Enter Placerville.
- At the end of the ramp, Left onto Mosquito Rd. Green sign ← Main Street.
- In 0.1 miles, Right onto Main Street. Follow Main Street through the old town. Look for a coffee stop or do some shopping.

Placerville — “Old Hangtown”

Established in 1848, Placerville became one of the booming mining and supply centers of the Gold Rush. Its nickname “Hangtown” recalls the rough justice of the mining camps. Historic Main Street and its bell tower offer a compact walking stop.

Placerville was also a Pony Express relay station and became its western terminus in July 1861.

LOOK FOR: The historic Main Street storefronts and bell tower. Suggested coffee stop: 30–40 minutes.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Highway 49 — California's Mother Lode to Jackson

Southbound on Hwy 49, the landscape changes to oak-studded foothills and old mining settlements. Highway 49 takes its number from the "Forty-Niners," the gold seekers who flooded into California in 1849. The route passes through a region where placer mining gave way to increasingly deep, capital-intensive hard-rock operations.

- In Placerville, near the end of Old Town, Left onto Sacramento Street, no signs, just past the big Tattoo store on the left.
  - This becomes Hwy 49
- In 2.8 miles, at the stoplight, turn Right to stay on Hwy49. Green sign: "49 SOUTH →"
- In 2.2 miles, turn Left to stay on Hwy 49. Green sign "49 ←". Direction "Jackson"
  - In 14.5 miles, at the Roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay straight on Hwy 49.
- In 2.4 miles, turn Left to stay on Hwy 49. Green sign "49 ←". Direction Jackson.
- In 7.8 miles, at the stoplight, turn Left to stay on Hwy 49, Green sign "88 49 ←" . Direction Jackson.
- In 1.7 miles, turn Left onto Main Street. Brown sign "Downtown Jackson, Business District, Historic Buildings"

Jackson Old Town is relatively small and ends at the National Hotel straight ahead. Street parking or public parking lot behind the National Hotel. LUNCH STOP. 60 Minutes.

Jackson — Gold beneath the streets

Jackson grew into a major hard-rock mining center. The Kennedy Mine reached a shaft depth of 5,912 feet. In 1922, a fire at the neighboring Argonaut Mine trapped 47 miners, all of whom died despite a prolonged rescue attempt. The mine structures are a powerful reminder that the Gold Rush became a dangerous industrial enterprise, not merely a story of prospectors with pans.

EASTBOUND: BACK OVER THE HIGH SIERRA

Hwy 88 — HIGH COUNTRY & RETURN TO TAHOE

From Jackson, CA 88 climbs from Gold Country through pine forests into granite mountains. This is the principal sporting-driving stretch: winding grades, changing elevation and striking scenery. The road generally follows the historic Carson Pass crossing corridor, although the present pavement is not the original emigrant trail.

- At the end of Main Street, turn left in front of the National Hotel (Water Street)
- In 30 yards, turn Right onto Broadway
- In 100 yards, at the stop sign, turn Left onto Hwy 88 (no signs)
- In 50.0 miles, turn Right onto Kays Road to the Sandy Cove Picnic Area. PHOTO OP OF SILVER LAKE.

Silver Lake and Kirkwood — A traveler's refuge

Silver Lake offers classic alpine scenery, with granite peaks and water close to the road. Kirkwood began as a 19th-century waystation on the Amador–Carson Valley Road; the modern ski resort opened in 1972. This is a good area for a brief, weather-dependent photography stop, provided safe legal parking is available.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Return to Hwy 88 and continue toward and through Kirkwood (6.0 miles)
- 6.2 miles past Kirkwood, arrive at Carson Pass.



Carson Pass — 8,574 feet

Named for explorer Kit Carson, the pass is associated with John C. Frémont's difficult 1844 winter expedition. In 1848, former Mormon Battalion members helped open the Carson River wagon route. The crossing soon carried emigrants bound for California's goldfields. At this elevation, June can still feel like winter: pack a warm layer.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Continue on Hwy 88
- In 6.2 miles, Turn Right onto Blue Lake Road into the Hope Valley Recreation Area. Poorly signed. PHOTO OP . Parking on left after a few hundred feet.

Hope Valley — Why it was called "Hope"

After struggling through Carson Canyon, emigrants found an open meadow with grass and water. Members of the Mormon Battalion named Hope Valley in 1848, expressing their relief. Near Pickett's Junction, the National Park Service identifies surviving wagon-trail traces and interpretive markers. This is a particularly appealing final scenic stop before the return over Luther Pass.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Return to Hwy 88
- In 2.5 miles, turn Left onto Hwy 89 North. Sign for Lake Tahoe.
- In 2.6 miles cross over Luther Pass

Luther Pass (Elev. 7740) - Return to South Shore

CA 89 climbs north from Hope Valley over Luther Pass, named for pioneer Ira M. Luther. A connecting trail in this area briefly carried Pony Express traffic. Descend toward Meyers and rejoin US 50 for South Lake Tahoe.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Continue on Hwy 89
- In 8.5 miles at the Roundabout, take the 1st exit onto Hwy 50 (sign for South Lake Tahoe)
- In 0.8 miles, at the stoplight, Right onto Pioneer Trail. Green sign "Pioneer Trail →"
- In 7.9 miles, turn Right onto Hwy 50 and the Hotel is 0.6 miles on the left.