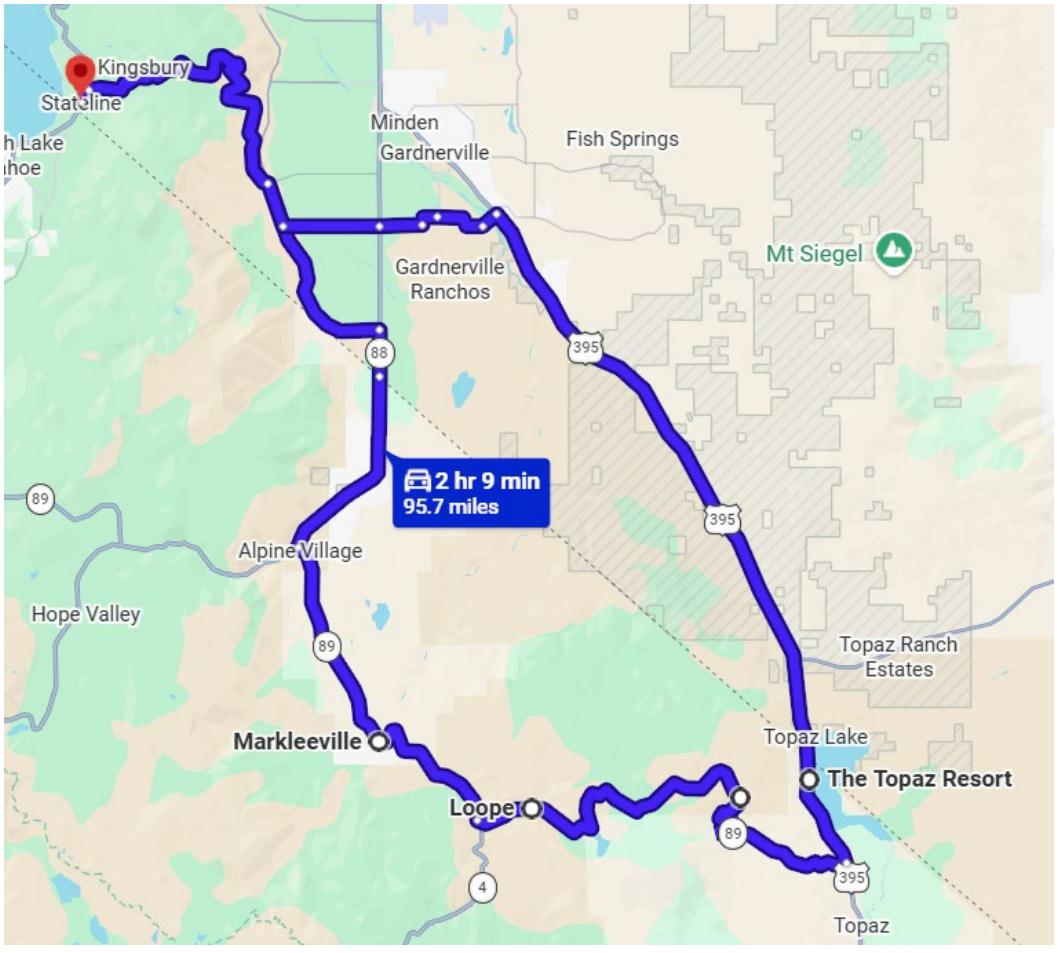
HEALEY 75th ANNIVERSARY MEET

OPTIONAL SCENIC DRIVES AND TOURS

KINGSBURY GRADE / MONITOR PASS / TOPAZ LAKE TOUR

Drive Time = 2:15 hours, 95.7 miles, roundtrip, counterclockwise



THE DRIVE

A sweeping loop from Lake Tahoe through one of California's least-populated counties, over a remote 8,314-foot Sierra pass, down to the Great Basin and back toward Tahoe. Expect a mix of mountain curves, open vistas, historic mining country and quieter roads that reward unhurried driving. The route tells a story of changing frontiers: Indigenous travel and trade routes; fur trappers and explorers; silver and gold prospectors; hard-rock mines and vanished camps; and finally modern high-altitude motoring.

SUGGESTED DAY PLAN (morning departure)

9:00 am	**Depart South Lake Tahoe. Fuel up.**
9:45 - 10:30 am	**Markleeville (45 min, coffee stop)**
10:30 – 11:30 am	**Loope / Monitor Pass**
11:45 – 1:00 pm	**Lunch at Topaz Lake Resort**
2:00 pm	**Arrival back at Hotel**

Kingsbury Grade — A Spectacular Mountain Descent

One of the most exhilarating stretches of our tour is Kingsbury Grade (Nevada Highway 207), the historic mountain road connecting Lake Tahoe with Carson Valley. Originally developed in the 1860s as a toll road serving the booming Comstock mining region, it crosses Daggett Summit at 7,334 feet before descending nearly 2,500 feet to the valley floor.

For Austin-Healey drivers, Kingsbury Grade is a delight: sweeping curves, tight switchbacks, and dramatic elevation changes. Leaving the pine forests of Lake Tahoe behind, the road winds down the eastern face of the Sierra Nevada, revealing increasingly spectacular panoramic views across the vast Carson Valley and the distant mountains beyond. It's a thrilling introduction to the wide-open landscapes of western Nevada and a wonderful way to begin our mountain motoring adventure. We will drive the Grade both ways!

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Turn left out of the hotel parking lot onto Hwy 50
- In 0.4 miles, turn right onto Hwy 207, Kingbury Grade Road. Green sign "Kingsbury Grade →"
- Proceed over the Grade for 11.1 miles to Hwy 206
- At stop sign, turn Right onto Hwy 206. White sign "206 ←→"
- In 6.2 miles, at stop sign, turn Right. Direction Markleeville.
- In 7.5 miles, turn Left onto Hwy 89 South. Green sign "4 ←, 89 ←→"
- In 6.4 miles, arrive Markleeville. COFFEE STOP.

Markleeville — boomtown and county seat

Markleeville developed during the 1860s mining era and became the county seat of Alpine County, formed in 1864. The town's modest size today belies the ambitions of the surrounding silver-mining districts. Its courthouse, older commercial buildings and Alpine County Museum provide a compact introduction to frontier life.

Optional stop: Alpine County Museum. Open Thur – Sun, 10am – 4pm.

This is a tiny town but has a couple of cafes and the Cutthroat Brewing Company.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Continue on Hwy 89 South
- In 4.8 miles. Left to stay on Hwy 89. Green sign "← 89 to 395, Monitor Pass"
- In 1.8 miles, pass through Loope (no signs)

Loope — the town that disappeared

The name Loope marks a former mining settlement in the Monitor mining district west of Monitor Pass. Mining claims and workings survive in the historical record, but this is not a reconstructed ghost town with a visitor center. The best interpretation is from the road: imagine the challenge of bringing machinery, food and supplies into these mountains during a brief mining boom.

Leviathan Mine — mining's lasting legacy

Near this region lies the former Leviathan sulfur mine, worked intermittently from the 19th century into the 1960s. Modern cleanup efforts address acid mine drainage. It is an important reminder that the region's mining history includes environmental consequences. The mine is not a suggested visitor stop.

Monitor Pass — the driving highlight

At 8,314 feet, Monitor Pass is among the memorable high-country crossings of the eastern Sierra. CA 89 winds through open forest and aspen stands, then drops toward the broad Antelope Valley. The eastern descent offers especially dramatic views. Stop only in safe, legal pullouts and keep the roadway clear for other traffic.

Jedediah Smith and the early explorers

The Monitor Pass region is associated with Jedediah Smith's 1827 eastward journey out of California. Long before a paved highway existed, Native peoples had extensive knowledge of these mountains and their routes. Smith's journey belongs within that much longer human history.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Continue on Hwy 89 South



- In 6.4 miles, arrive at the Monitor Pass.
- In 2.7 miles, arrive at the Monitor Pass Viewpoint (just a turnout on the left side of the road).
- In 2.0 miles, another viewpoint, also on the left.

- In 4.7 miles at T, left onto Hwy 395 North. Direction Carson City.
- In 4.0 miles, arrive at **Topaz Lodge and Casino**, on the right. NOT Topaz Resort, which is a campground. **LUNCH STOP.** The Lodge has a remarkably good restaurant with great lake views. Gas here.



Topaz Lake — from alpine granite to desert basin
After the summit, the landscape opens into the Great Basin. Topaz Lake, a reservoir on the California–Nevada border, provides a scenic contrast to the alpine forests above. This is a natural lunch and fuel stop before heading north through Carson Valley.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS THROUGH CARSON VALLEY

- Return to Hwy 395 North
- In 18.3 miles, at stoplight, turn Left onto Riverview Drive. Green sign "Riverview Drive ←". 7-11 on the corner with gas.
- In 0.6 miles the road becomes Dresslerville Road, continue
- In 1.5 miles the road becomes Hwy 756 / Centerville Lane, continue
- In 0.6 miles, at the stop sign, turn Right to stay on Centerville
- In 1.2 miles, at the Roundabout, continue straight (2nd exit)
- In 2.8 miles at T and stop, turn Right onto Hwy 206. Green sign "To SR207 Genoa →"
- In 1.3 miles, turn Left onto Hwy 207 / Kingsbury Grade. Enjoy the trip over in the opposite direction!
- In 11.1 miles, at stoplight and T, turn left onto Hwy 50. The Hotel is 0.4 miles on the right.