**General Preview: Negev and the Regional Council of Ramat Negev**

The Negev constitutes 60-70% of the area of the State of Israel. Within the Negev, Ramat HaNegev is the largest regional council in Israel, expanding to over 22% of Israel's land.

The region's population includes around 6000 citizens in 14 diverse communities, including Kibbutzim, Moshavim, Communal Villages and Individual Settlements.

**Point of Interest #1:**

Film explaining about the R&D Agro Center (Auditorium)

What does R&D stand for? Research and Development.

R&D Agro- Agricultural Research and Development.

The purpose of the R&D Agro Centers around the country:

1. Respond to specific problems that the farmers encounter, such as diseases, fertilizing, nourishment, etc.
2. Provide professional guidance to improve the growth methods of existing crops.
3. Develop new crops, which are compatible with the conditions of the region, in order to increase the farmers' crop diversity.

"Being a Farmer in the Desert" is a touching film showing the daily lives of the farmers and illustrates the interaction between them and the R&D Center. The length of the film is 12 min. It is in Hebrew with English subtitles.

**Point of Interest #2:**

Interactive Display Panel

Who were the first Farmers of Ramat HaNegev and what did they grow?

How did the Agriculture develop in the Negev in Modern times?

Who was Yoel DeMalach and what was his contribution in the development of agriculture in the Negev?

What will the Agriculture of the Future look like?

Press each tab to watch a different short film (2 min. long)

**Point of Interest #3:**

Lookout Point of the Area- Climate, Soil and Water

Ramat HaNegev has a comfortable yet challenging desert climate: In the summer: during the day it is hot & dry, but the nights are cool desert nights. In the winter: during the day it is cold and at night the temperature can drop under 0 degrees Celsius… The average yearly water fall is 90 mm (10 days of rain…).

The area has 2 types of soil: Sand dunes (look to the north), and Loess soil (look to the west), which are very different in terms of their grasp of water: In the sand, the water seeps quickly, as opposed the Loess soil, which holds the water for a long period of time but also gets blocked easily. Using drip irrigation, the farmers can adjust their irrigation to the different types of soil.

The water comes from 2 sources:

-Saline groundwater, pumped from a subterranean reservoir.

-Desalinated water from desalination plants along the Mediterranean Coast.

Using a water dilution computer (a development of the Ramat Negev R&D Center), the farmers adjust the saline level to the crop: 2 pipelines from the different sources of water enter the computer on one side, while 1 pipeline exits on the other side, having the saline concentration pre-chosen by the farmer.

**Point of Interest #4:**

Negev Products Shop

Here you will get to taste (at no additional charge) from the vegetables grown at the R&D Center, and enjoy shopping from our selection of products and souvenirs made by local farmers and artists: olive oil, jojoba oil, Aragon oil, honey, wine, natural cosmetics, ceramics and more.

**Point of Interest #5:**

The French Commando Monument

The French Commando unit consisted of approx. 100 French speaking soldiers, mostly Jewish immigrants from North African countries, and partly Israel loving Christians. The unit was part of the Palmach's 9th battalion in the Negev Brigade, which fought during the Independence War in the years 1948-1949.

The soldiers in the French speaking unit, who were different in dress and language from their Israel born Palmach comrades, were called "The French Commando", a nickname that became their official name with the passing of time.

At the Chorev Operation, in December 1948, The French Commando joined the battles to conquer some lookout points on the Beer Sheva- Nitzana road and suffered heavy losses of 15 soldiers. During the battles 7 of the injured unit found cover under one of the train bridges, North East to Ashalim. The Egyptians discovered their hiding spot and murdered them. When Kibbutz Revivim members came to the help of the injured, they found their bodies instead…. In 1995 a Memorial was inaugurated nearby in honor of the unit, the battles it took part in, and in memory of the fallen.

**Point of Interest #6:**

Overview of the array of Solar Power Plants in Ashalim (Ramat Hanegev)

In 2009 the Israeli Government made a decision that by the year 2020, the electricity sector in Israel should produce 10% of its electricity from renewable energy sources, such as wind, water and sun.

It was decided that 3 Solar Power plants will be established in the area of Ashalim. All 3 plants combined will provide 2-2.5% of the electricity consumption in Israel, each using a different technology:

**PV:** A power plant with photovoltaic technology, 35 MW. Concessionaire: Ashelim Sun P.V. Company (not visible from overview)

**Plot A:** A Thermo-solar power plant with Trough technology. 121 MW. Concessionaire: Negev Energy Company. (You can see the rows of mirrors looking to the South-South West).

**Plot B:** A Thermo-solar power plant with Hybrid Thermo- solar Tower technology. 121 MW. Concessionaire: Megalim Company. (You can see the Power plant looking to the East).

Across the highway, you can spot the highest thermo- solar tower in the world! (250 Meters tall)

This is the Solar Power Plant run by Megalim, in a field of mirrors which expands to an area of over than 3 sq.km, at the top of the tower there is a water receptor to which the 50,600 mirrors all focus the sun beams. The electricity produced by the station will be able to supply electricity for approx. 120,000 homes.