

Follow the Royal Road

Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail Site Special Tenth Anniversary Newsletter

October, 2015

**Friends of El Camino Real
Annual Meeting and
Tenth Anniversary Program
Wednesday, October 14 at 7:00 PM
Socorro Public Library**

Guest Speaker Francisco Sisneros,
noted genealogist and historian, will present:

Eusebio Durán y Chavez in the Court of King Charles III

In 1774 Durán y Chavez, frustrated by the New Mexico governor's refusal to appoint him to the prestigious position of *alcalde mayor*, chose to leave his ranch near Alameda and brave the rigors of *El Camino Real* to present his case to the King of Spain in person. This presentation will tell the story of Eusebio's long and eventful trip.

Francisco Sisneros, whose own New Mexico roots extend back to the mid-1600s, is a seasoned researcher and speaker on the history and genealogy of Hispanic families of New Mexico. He served as Assistant Superintendent of Socorro Public Schools from 1981-2001 and now lives with his wife Inez in Casa Colorada, New Mexico.

Friends members will hold a very brief meeting before the Speaker's presentation. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

All are welcome!

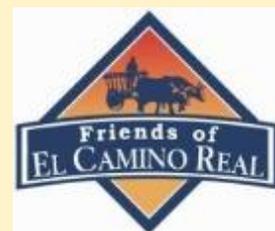
**El Camino Real Historic Trail Site
Festival of the Trail
Tenth Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, November 21**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend an all-day party that will include music, art, food, and presentations commemorating the grand opening of the Site on November 19, 2005. If you haven't visited the great museum there, now is the time – admission is FREE for the day!



©Jerry Sintz

**Save the Date and watch
for further information!!**



A Brief Introduction to El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (The Royal Road to the Interior Lands)

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is the oldest, longest, and until recently, the most forgotten and neglected pioneer trail in the American West. Its history actually began long before the first Spanish explorers and settlers ventured north from Mexico. For centuries, Native Americans traveled along the valley of the Rio Grande carrying trade goods such as buffalo hides, turquoise, and obsidian southward. These were exchanged for copper bells, ornamental shells, live macaws or their colorful feathers, and other treasures to delight the people living in what we now know as New Mexico. In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate led a group of Spanish settlers northward from Mexico along some of the same ancient trails, changing the lives of the native peoples forever. Thus began *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*.

For nearly 300 years after 1598, Oñate's route was literally the only road between Mexico and New Mexico, used by explorers, priests, colonists, soldiers, traders, adventurers, prisoners summoned to Mexico to meet their fate facing the Inquisition, a contingent of the Confederate Army heading north with a hope of victory and desperately fleeing back south in defeat, and thousands of others, known and unknown.

The Royal Road was the conduit for so much history during those three centuries. Technically, it lost its claim to royalty after the Mexican Revolution in 1821, when the King of Spain no longer controlled it. Later, the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the war between the U.S. and

Mexico severed the Road at the border. The northern segment now belonged to the United States, the longer southern segment to Mexico.

But El Camino Real, both in name and in spirit, is still with us, north or south of the border: all 1600 mainly isolated and remote miles between Mexico City and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Parts of it have been paved over and those sections are heavily used to this day. Some city streets bear the name El Camino Real. The railroad between Albuquerque and El Paso still uses the wide, flat section through the infamous, waterless, *Jornada del Muerto* – The Journey of Death. But many miles are still as they were 300 years ago, a rough and lonely wagon trail now slowly fading into the desert sands.

After the railroad came through the area in the 1880s, the old trail fell into disuse and was mainly ignored and forgotten. Fortunately, a few dedicated, hard-working, and persistent people devoted a prodigious amount of time, money, and effort into creating *El Camino Real International Heritage Center*, which opened in 2005.

A recent reorganization of various state agencies placed the site under the umbrella of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs and the name was changed to *El Camino Real Historic Trail Site*. Because of this change in structure, the name of its supporting organization, El Camino Real International Heritage Center Foundation, was officially changed on February 28, 2015 to *Friends of El Camino Real Historic Trail Site*. Our mission is to support and promote the Trail Site's activities and educational efforts.

Gala Preview Reception November 18, 2005

A Benefit Reception took place the night before the official opening of the Heritage Center. We reproduce here a portion of the original invitation for the evening:

*Please join the celebration
of one of the most historic
trails in North America*

Champagne, wine, and heavy hors d'oeuvres

Celebrity guides will take guests through the exhibits

Live and Silent Auction including Spanish Ocho Reales coin, paintings, and period artifacts

Entertainment by Los Trinos of Chuy Martinez

Friday, November 18, 2005
5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

El Camino Real International Heritage Center
Socorro, NM

\$100 per person includes a personally inscribed brick to be placed on the patio of the Heritage Center

Festive or period costume

Proceeds from this event will benefit the future development and programming of El Camino Real International Heritage Center

Board Member Lorraine Archuleta remembers the reception as very elegant, with at least 200 people in attendance. Everyone gathered near the museum entrance where a large table was set with food and drinks, and the evening was filled with laughter, music and smiling faces.

Dedication and Grand Opening November 19, 2005

This was an over-the-top event. An article in the Foundation newsletter gives the attendance on opening day as 2870 people! Shuttle buses from Socorro and Truth or Consequences ran all day long. Besides tours of the museum, there were a number of attractions outdoors, including a blacksmith, a micaceous clay demonstrator, living history reenactors, pueblo artisans, a retablo artist, a Navajo weaver and Navajo flutist, plus food vendors all over the place. Board Member John Larson was there, and gives us this description:

Yes, it was an impressive debut. The number of people attending on opening day spoke volumes for the significance of the center and the local, state and national importance of the trail itself. The exhibits winding around truly gave one a sense of the journey. My first glimpse of the site, however, came ten days earlier when Tim McElroy, first Director of the center, and Yolanda Nava, then Marketing Director of New Mexico State Monuments, led about two dozen newspaper, magazine, and radio journalists through the network of exhibits. Also on hand was Rosario Provenza, who designed the exhibits including the enlargements of historic photographs and relics through each period of the road's history. I recall Socorro's Mayor Ravi Bhasker telling the group that the center had been in the works since 1992 but the road's relevance remains timeless. "The important thing to remember about El Camino Real," he said, "is that it still lives today, people are traveling it all the time, only it's known as I-25."

Take a look at a map – it is still the only major north to south route through the state!

About the Friends

Contact Us:

Friends of El Camino Historic Trail Site
PO Box 399
San Antonio, New Mexico 87832
575-854-3600 – Ranger’s Office
575-854-3679 – Museum Shop

Website: www.elcaminoreal.org

Find Us:



Take I-25 to Exit 115, which is about half way between Socorro and Truth or Consequences. Turn east for a very short distance and then right (south) on Highway 1 about 1½ miles. At the Rest Stop (which cannot be accessed from Highway 1), turn left (east) onto the paved road 3 miles to the El Camino Trail Site. Informational signs and picnic rest stops are along the way to the large parking lot at the Museum entrance.

Board of Directors:

Kay Krehbiel – President
Vice President – vacant
Lorraine Archuleta – Secretary
Liz Vallejos – Treasurer
Sandra Qureshi – Board Member
Maria Smith-Vega – Board Member
Virginia Hawthorn – Board Member
John Larson – Board Member

What Are Friends For?

Officially, our purpose is “to promote the activities of El Camino Real Historic Trail Site and to support its educational efforts.” Here are some of the things the Friends do to achieve that purpose:

- ✚ Manage and staff the Museum Gift Shop and Book Store
- ✚ Provide assistance with and help fund special programs at El Camino Trail Site. You may have enjoyed some of these recent special programs:
 - The Fiber Arts Fair
 - Native New Mexico Day
 - Adobe Workshop & Demonstration
- ✚ Provide funding grants for school trips to the Trail Site
- ✚ Sponsor off-Site special events to help preserve the history and heritage of the Trail
- ✚ Present a special program at the annual Membership Meeting



Photo by Virginia Hawthorn

Dance group from Jemez Pueblo performs at Native American Day, September 20, 2014. The dancers never wavered, despite the blazing heat in the Amphitheater! Spectators huddled in the shade of the building.

Upcoming Special Event!

La Pastorela

By La Gran Pastorela de Belén

Sunday, December 20 at 1:00 p.m.

Garcia Opera House in Socorro

FREE admission

Refreshments following presentation

Sponsored by

Friends of El Camino Historic Trail Site